



ISAAC FOOT



BY WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

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VARIETIES IN PROSE

VOL. II

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BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

VOLUME II

RAMBLES

BY

PATRICIUS WALKER

PART II

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1893

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RAMBLES BY PATRICIUS WALKER.



RAMBLE THE TWELFTH.

IN A STRANGE LAND.

(1871.)

I SHUT my eyes and open them again. Am I dreaming? It seems as if this morning (or was it a month ago?) I was endungeoned in a labyrinth of grimy, busy streets. Modern England moved, clattered, chattered around me—'bus men and bourse men, costermongers and merchant princes, shopkeepers, street-haunters, newsboys, waggons, chariots, 'swells' and 'girls of the period,' with all the sights, sounds, and odours of a huge, shapeless modern city, from which was no escape; and no other kind of life seemed possible.

Streets have melted like mist. I am, indeed, no longer in England, but emphatically in 'a Strange Land,' and all the English call it so. I rest on a wild and lonely hill-top, watching the placid sinking sun of a September day, shedding its veil of light over a multitude of many-folded mountains. Westward, even to the gates of sunset, spreads the mystic mountain realm, ethereal as cloudland, but more permanent. I lie on heather; and straight below me drop the steep green fields and sloping woods to a Valley far down, with winding river and scattered cottages. Among

the opposite ramparts of the Vale, one steep crag uplifts the much crumbled ruins of a Castle, very ancient, whose founder's name or time no man remembers rightly. The gray stones seem coeval with the wall of cliff behind them, across which now runs a last ruddy ray of evening. The bare fells behind me fall into a side glen, with rocky faces rising out of copse. A few wild sheep that stare and scour away, and a wide-winged plover flitting round with complaining whinge, uneasy at my presence, are the only living things I see.

What is this strange country? The world is not like a map. When you look forth from a hill-top you see no *names* marked on the landscape. In reality places *have* no names, nor men and women either. Names are extraneous artificialities, convenient so long and so far as people agree about their form. And on this matter people often differ extremely, and much puzzlement is the result. The English call this region by a name signifying the Strange or Outlandish Country; the natives naturally call it something very different. What boots it? Here are ancient mountains, rocky ribs of our earth, and vault of sky coloured with the last light of one more day of earth's history. What are 'Italy,' 'India,' 'England,' and all the rest, but names, words, which some use and far more reject? A landscape, above all things, has no name, not even the pretence of one.

Yet words of some sort we must have, or how can we speak? how am I to go on telling you? I will ask this old woman plodding in a bye-lane half-way down the hill how she names her Valley. She is drest, sure enough, in a very strange way, much like a witch in a story-book. She shakes her old head in answer to my question; I ask again, very distinctly, and she utters two or three words in an unknown tongue. A main road farther down leads me towards a large village. On a corner is a large printed notice which I stop

to read but find I cannot, for this too is in an unknown tongue, fifty times stranger than French or Italian, German or Spanish.

It was a comfort to find that the people at the inn spoke English intelligibly, though with a strong foreign accent, and there were several English tourists in the dining-room, with one of whom, a mild old gentleman, I had some pleasant conversation. After dinner we were agreeably surprised with music, the old airs of the country performed on an extremely ancient sort of stringed instrument, which was no other than a harp; nor in fact were we elsewhere than in the land of Gwynedd in Kymru, named by the Saxons or English 'North Wales.'

Wales, to this day of the nineteenth century, is notably unlike England. Undivided now from the larger and more fertile part of the island by any Offa's Dyke, river, line of castles, or other visible march, its shires geographically and legally a piece of England, the people here have thoughts, habits, ways of life of their own, and a language of their own, not only generally spoken and written, preached and sung, but taking the shape of books, magazines and newspapers, produced and accepted on the ordinary principles of supply and demand; which language (of course with many modifications and accretions) is no other at basis than that which ancient Britain spoke before the Teuton tribes who gave name and shape to 'England' were ever heard of in the island.

Those tribes, Angles, Saxons, and others, came to call themselves by the general name of 'English;' but to this the Britons never gave in, and in this part of the island Saxons is still the name for all English people. In this the Welsh, Irish and Scottish Kelts are at one. But the English on their part go much farther in disregard of their neighbours' claim to self-designation: 'British' they appropriate, in a loose way, to themselves; 'Kymri' they

ignore; and call the people of this western region 'Strangers'—'Foreigners'—'Outlandish Folk'—for this and nothing else is the meaning of the term 'Welsh.' The Saxon invaders began by calling the British 'Wealas,' and the word sticks to this day. There were 'Bret-wealas' (which included the mountaineers of the west); there were 'Strath-clæd-wealas' to the north of them, and 'Cern-wealhas' (Cornish Welsh) to the south.

This people of ancient race dwelling in the mountainous west wing of Britain name their own land *Kymru*, and their own selves *Kymri*—whereof no satisfactory derivation presents itself: *Kimbri*—*Κιμμέριοι*—were these their ancestors? and who were they? The night of time has closed over them in true Kimmerian darkness.

What are they and their language to the Irish? 'Nothing at all!' answered Sir William Betham and others—quite wrongly, in spite of their elaborated evidence and arguments. Our best authorities (Zeuss¹ and other indefatigable Teutons) teach us otherwise. Both are remnants of the ancient Keltic people, who have been intermingled with after-comers, nigh submerged, almost overwhelmed; yet remain to this day recognisable. Their language too survives, oldest of living European tongues, lingering among mountains and sea-coast rocks and cliffs—a strange and affecting relic of the immemorial past. It sounds almost as ancient as the sea-gull's cry, the fall of the breaking wave, or the dash of the mountain torrent.

The two remaining dialects of the Keltic tongue are the *Kymric* (subdivided by geographical separations, into Welsh, Cornish and Breton), and the *Gaedhlic* (of Ireland), generally called 'Gaelic,' whereof Scotch-Highland and Manx are offshoots. All are yet spoken by sections of mankind, save Cornish, which fell extinct about a century ago; and by far the most important of them all, in the fulness of its grammar—

¹ Zeuss, *Gram. Celt. Præfatio*.

tical forms and the number and antiquity of its literary monuments, is the Irish Gaedhlic. The Kymric speech has gradually grown composite by admixture of many Welshified English words. It is amusing, by the way, to note how little interest English Lexicographers take in Keltic. Professor Skeat (one of the newest modern lights) used 'Erse' for the Irish form, and 'Gaelic' for the Scotch form of Keltic, which is just calling 'right' 'left.' 'Erse,' a mere corruption of the word 'Irish,' is never applied (save in ignorance) to anything but the derived minor form of Gaedhlic, spoken in parts of Scotland.

I had watched that sunset from one of the Berwyn Hills above the village of Llangollen (Church of Collen, a dim old British saint); the civil and excellent hostelry was 'The Hand;' and the musician a Welsh harper who played 'The March of the Men of Harlech;' *Serch Hudol*, or, 'the Allurements of Love;' and *Cadair Idris*, commonly known as 'Jenny Jones.'

It was Charles Mathews (second of the name) who put to this last air its well-known Welsh-English words, which have at least a touch of passionate simplicity, a breath of natural sweetness, caught by the clever young engineer (as C.M. was in his early days) among these hills and glens:

My name's Evan Morgan, I live in Llangollen,
 The Vale of St. Tafid, the flower of North Wales;
 My father and mother, too, lived in Llangollen;
 Good truth, I was born in that sweetest of vales, etc.

Far from first-rate; yet not mere gaslight lyricism, unrefreshing as the 'property' roses which embower it. Mathews's 'Jenny Jones' is stage-pastoral; gets material from country life to amuse the citizen; but it does this in an innocent and sympathising manner, not flavoured with the knowing town-sneer now in vogue. One might believe that Mephistopheles had become our Master of Revels, were

it not for the lack of wit and invention. Songs used to come up from the country to town, like milk (whatever might happen to both) ; but now it is the town that gives songs to the country—and such songs !

Are these mere trivialities? Individual character (the unit of national) is built up of petty incidents and habits : songs and music can do harm or good to individuals and even to nations,—though it is hardly necessary to weigh ballads against laws. It may be doubted whether the presence or absence of the musical and lyrical faculty (or of any kind of artistic faculty) gives in itself indication of the general character of a man or a nation,—though that general character strongly modifies the development and application of the faculty. Marked artistic faculty is found in connection, here with one set of qualities, there with another. The Irish, with their cousins the Welsh, are nationally musical ; and the Scotch, grown unlike in many things, keep a thread of old cousinship in music. The Germans are musical ; so are the Italians : and, after their own fashion, the Negroes. The diligent Herr Kapellmeister and learned contrapuntist, the idle nigger, the careless gondolier, the strolling harper and piper,—here is variety of character enough. Haydn said he would rather have written the old Irish air ‘ Aileen Aroon ’ (*Eibhlín a Rúin*, ‘ Eveleen my Darling ’—introduced, by the way, as Scotch into Boildeau’s opera *La Dame Blanche*) than a dozen of his own best. But if every type of individual and national character can consort with musical genius, music is not the less but all the more a gift and grace, sweetening and embellishing man’s life ; nay, not seldom helping his uneasy steps—if not over a ‘ burning marle ’—over some rough and tiresome piece of road ; and what music we have ought to be good, and the poorer in music ought to learn from the richer. In regard to ‘ classical music ’ we are perhaps improving on the whole ; certainly there is more of it audible in cultivated

English circles than used to be. Yet most of the drawing-room songs in vogue are dismally weak and empty; and as to national and popular song (in which words and music are always to be reckoned together) there is everywhere a sad falling off. England proper at no time ranked high among singing peoples; the English peasant has ever been stolid in matters of music and poetry. It must be owned that eating and drinking is his favourite lyrical subject, after which comes a rough matter-of-fact amorousness, with seldom a touch of tenderness or imagination. Yet here too was no lack of old melodies, sturdy or quaint (if decidedly on a lower level than the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh), and words that smacked of the soil. But the songs of England are now the songs of the London Music Halls, and the lyrical blight is spreading over Scotland and Wales too, and has crossed the Irish Sea. English musicians in the last couple of centuries produced a rich crop of *part-songs*, glees, catches, etc., many of these good both in music and words; but they fly over the heads of our peasants and artisans for want of a little early culture in music. I wish the new School Boards would have *part-singing* taught to their young people all over the kingdom. And instead of piano-drill among the richer classes, let the *reading* of music be as thoroughly taught to children as the reading of words, and singing taught to all but the hopelessly incompetent, who will perhaps be found fewer than we imagine.

This Saturday night, at Llangollen, as I issued from the door of 'The Hand' for a moonlight walk, the town band, as it proved to be, came round a corner of the street followed by all the youth of the place. It was not playing *Ar hyd y nos* ('All through the Night') or the Harlech March, or even 'Jenny Jones,' but

'Slap bang! here we are again,
And jolly dogs are we!'

an air with a couple of rather droll and catching bars, the

rest nil; the words mere stupid vulgarity, all its associations—gaslight and gutter.

Might not those gentlefolk of patriotic sentiment who labour to sustain the ancient Kymric speech by their *Eisteddfoda* and so on, do something more than is done to keep alive and popular the beautiful old music of their country, and to prevent its being ousted by the gin-palace lyricism of ‘Jolly Nash’ and ‘the Great Vance’? It would be easier to keep alive the music than the language, and, as appears to some, it would be a better thing to do. Kymric (the corrupt modern form) is spoken by a few thousand people, and there is no possibility of its spreading. English is the tongue of trade, of law, of literature and science, of general intercourse, for a vast and constantly increasing proportion of mankind. A knowledge of Kymric in addition, or any second language, if properly acquired and subordinated, may be an accomplishment of value; but this, at best, would be too dearly bought by any interference with the free and general use of English. If it be asked, Should Welsh be learned as an accomplishment?—By all means, by those who have time and taste. But, should Welsh be as far as possible kept up as the language of West Britain, the people be encouraged to converse in Welsh, to sing in Welsh, to read in Welsh, to pray in Welsh, to think in Welsh, and English be only known supplementarily as a useful foreign tongue? Answer, No: this, on the whole, would decidedly do far more harm than good.

The varieties of language among mankind have put on record a great many remarkable variations of circumstances and manners and ways of thinking, and contributed many curious refinements to the art of expression by words. Nor does form of speech fail to react on thinking and on doing. The philologist, ethnologist, literary student, and finally the historian (who ought to be all these and much besides) will find abundant work for many long years to come in the vast

museum of human speech, of more than 900 rooms great and small; for so many distinct languages are reckoned up. But variety of language, curious, interesting, and valuable as are many of its phenomena, is it not at the present day, regarded broadly, a huge hindrance to human progress? And if we could reduce all the living languages of the civilised world to half-a-dozen, to three, nay to one, would it not on the whole be a blessed improvement? The disused languages would of course remain in their monuments for scientific and literary study.

This is one of the many things in our foolish (yet fathomless) earthly life on which one may expect to look back with amusement—the fuss people make about their ‘language.’ We use certain words in this street for bread and salt, cat and dog, rain and snow, while in the very next street they use another set. How proud each street is of its own way of talking! Social intercourse between the two is imperfect and awkward. If any inhabitant of A street goes into a shop in B street, he does not know what to ask for or how to pay for it; if he buys a book, he cannot read it; if he catches some words, he half misunderstands them; and he wholly and habitually misunderstands the manners and customs, thoughts and intentions of B street in general. Imperfect intercourse, rival conceit, constant suspicion, frequent quarrels and fights—such is the mutual attitude of A street and B street. It would be too much to expect that Europe (to say nothing of Asia) should melt down its general speech into unity within any definable future period. France is highly proud of her super-refined bastard Latin, trimmed and snipt and polished within an inch of its life—very elegant for all that. Vaterland would hold sturdily to its strong and copious gutturals; and big Russia to her odd-looking but soft-sounding Slavonic speech, only beginning to be heard from afar off by us Occidentals. Of mellifluous Italian and stately Spanish, beautiful as they are,

the glory and world-importance have already receded into the past; yet, if they are to become mere literary languages, it will not be to-morrow or next day. Will Polish live for ever, or be absorbed by the cognate and conquering Russian? will even Turanian 'Magyar,' politically luckier, survive, or its allied Finnish by the Icy sea; or the faint whispers of those curious Basque folk in Pyrenean vales? Is Portuguese necessary to the world, or Wallachian, or the Romansch of the Grisons, all modifications of the dialects of Old Italy; or the Slavonic Bohemian and Bulgarian; or the Albanian, supposed relic of the 'barbarians' who bordered on ancient Greece? Is there need of the divided Danish, Swedish, and Icelandic, or of Flemish and Netherlandish speech distinct from German? Then the throng of dialects! It is lucky that usually a central classical dialect has dominated in each group—a solid practical gain which we owe to the literary class, and mainly to the poets.

Irish Gaelic is dying out as a spoken tongue, and every attempt to prolong its existence is labour thrown away. Not very much, however, is tried for it: it has no modern newspapers and magazines, or meeting of bards patronised by the gentry, or prize essays. So much the better. It is but an obstruction to real progress. And such also are spoken Erse (Irish of Scotland) and spoken Welsh. Keep up your fine old music among the people, ladies and gentlemen of Wales, a language that addresses all mankind, and let the Kymric (thickly patched as it is with disguised English)—let it sink, ungalvanised, into its quiet natural repose, not forgotten, nor remembered without some touch of natural pathos such as softens all the past, and chiefly the past of our native hills and fields, scenes and memorials of our ancestors' lives and our own.

Reasons for artificially propping up a decaying language may come under the heads of literary, political, sentimental. The study of Keltic literature is not likely to suffer by the

failure of Keltic as a living tongue. It is not the Welsh or Irish peasant who elucidates to the world the relics of ancient grammar, law, romance, and poetry, but some cultivated Zeuss, Grimm, Villemarqué, Llwyd, O'Donovan, O'Curry, Stokes. And it is not in the Welsh and Irish now spoken that these find their subjects for study. Policy of government, which formerly set itself against the use of the ancient tongue of these islands, especially in Ireland, has no longer any temptation to concern itself directly with the matter; but unity of speech ought to be the aim of the ruling powers of the kingdom, and of every influential person—each a ruler in his own sphere.

Sentimentally, I feel as strongly about old habitudes, old ways of speech, old churches, old houses too, old trees, as most people; and to hear the strange-sounding Speech of incalculably ancient days surviving on the lips of a peasant among the wild mountains of *Dun-nan-Gall* or *Keredigion* gives me a thrill of delight not unmingled with awe. Yet I know at the same time that causes as wide as all humanity are working together, and on the whole beneficently working, to its gradual extinction; and this conviction at once deepens the feeling with which I listen to its accents, and condemns all artificial struggle to prolong its natural date.

My bedroom window at 'The Hand' gave a pleasant morning glimpse of Dee (sacred river of the old Britons), now half empty of water, rushing from pool to pool among the rocks and ledges of its bed, and between me and it were the church and churchyard. The old village clusters round these—white houses and slated roofs, with two or three new streets beyond; the river is crossed by an ancient stone bridge; on either side rise the lofty, almost mountainous hills, with Dinas Bran, otherwise 'Crow Castle,' Rhine-like, on its particular steep; the general

valley closing up westwards to the hills, and opening out to the east and the English border—*Glen-dwy'r-Dwy*, 'Glen of the Water of Dee,' whence Owain of that ilk, called 'Owen Glendower' by the Saxon foe, sallied forth so often in his long and obstinate resistance to the Fourth Henry of England.

Cross the old bridge, trodden by the feet of fifteen generations of villagers, take this upward lane, then bend to the left, and we come to a delicious bit of water-side walk. The canal, led off from Dee to bear the burdens of a slate quarry, is little used. Firs and other trees overshadow the broad path beside it and the clear greenish gray water, which has current enough to carry the fallen leaf steadily away. In the sunlight it is liquid amber, and see among those waving green weeds the throng of little olive-backed fishes, that 'come and vanish without noise,' now in sunny sheen and now in cool shadow. 'O happy live the little fish!' Under a mossy bridge leads the delightful path; then we strike upwards by a cottage, commanding a view, fit for palace-windows, of the river glimpsing through rich groves, the threefold Vale (for here it makes an elbow, and sends off a branch northwards), and the lofty hills that guard it. Along a meadowside goes our way, into a hollow, dark with trees and vocal with a brook winding down to the Dee; and a piece of noble Gothic architecture rises before us, a group of lofty but roofless walls, gray and thick ivied, part ashlar, part built of thin pieces of slate, and pierced with window-openings of singular beauty: *Monasterium de Valle Crucis*, an Abbey of the Cistercian Order, founded about the year 1200, some twelvemonth after Richard Lionheart's battle-thirst was quenched by a Limousin arrow. The Abbey is ruined but not deserted, secluded but not solitary. An inhabited farmhouse, itself of gray antiquity, nestles among its lofty walls, with an old orchard by whose boundary grow elder-bushes, black with beaded berries, and some huge ash-trees, round

which a colony of rooks are cawing. Sleek cows graze in the green meadow by the brook. The surrounding hills, clothed on their lower slopes with foliage, just touched with yellowing autumn, rise aloft into a range of bare and almost austere summits. All this is in a glen going northward out of Llangollen Vale. A field or two from the Abbey, and belonging to the same seclusion, stands a yet more ancient and pathetic record of bygone time—a round stone pillar, some seven feet high, on a quadrangular base—*Colofn Eliseg*—‘the Column of Eliseg.’ A much worn inscription in Latin runs round the pillar, which has been interpreted as recording that the stone was raised (probably about one thousand two hundred years ago) by Cyngen to the memory of his great-grandfather Eliseg. And Eliseg is thought to have been a prince of this country, and to have lived in Dinas Bran, while his day lasted. The old column, of which the top is broken off, was doubtless originally a cross, and gave name to the Vallis Crucis, some six centuries before the abbey was built.

Out of this beautiful glen (two miles from Llangollen village) I mounted, by wood-paths and field-paths, at last climbing a long steep slope, to the massive mouldered walls of Dinas Bran, called ‘Crow Castle,’ which fits well enough its airy site. *Bran* is Kymric for ‘crow’; ‘Fortress of Bran’—a once famous warrior now forgot among men—is, perhaps, the likelier meaning. But two hundred and fifty years ago a native bard wrote an *Englyn* (a particular kind of short poem or epigram) somewhat of this purport, carrying allusion to the bird meaning in the name :

O Dinas Brân,
 Thy gates are gone.—
 Truly the Wild Birds’ Castle now !
 To thy fortress-height
 From a field of fight
 The raven returns, and the carrion-crow.

These few lines, even in the disadvantage of translation, can expand themselves to the mind's eye into a picture of ruin and desolation amid a fierce environment.

The Castle, of no small area, was dug up out of the stony hill-crest on which it stands, and the quarry all round it made its dry moat, which to this day remains broad and deep, though here and there partly filled with tumbled masonry. Rich and wide are the prospects from lofty Dinas Bran, up the Vale and down the Vale, woods and fields along the winding Dee, interfolded and many-headed hill region to north and west and south-west, and behind, separated by a deep glen, a range of rocky precipice, severe and lonely, but in some places marked with quarry-labour. The old Glyndwyrddwy, 'Glen of the Water of Dee,' probably reached from beyond Bala Lake to nigh the Cheshire border, some forty English miles, and a great part of its extent lies subject to the gazer from Dinas Bran;—Owen Glendower's country—'wild Glendower'—(yet the lord of Deeside was a man of high culture and accomplishments)—the last leader recognised as 'King of Wales'—a notable native personage in Welsh history. Four centuries and a half ago these hills knew him well, and oftentimes echoed his war-cry. In Owen's day Dinas Bran was no ruin; and his bard, Iolo Goch, has left a song in praise of a beautiful maiden dwelling in that high castle, whose heart he wished to melt.

My recollections and guesses on Crow Castle that day I afterwards pieced out, with help of some of the most credible books; but as usual, it was not easy to disentangle any length of clear thread. One must cut and snip, and piece out in make-shift fashion at best.

I wandered out after dusk that evening in Llangollen, and got up a rough road to a little hill commanding much

of the valley : huge dim bulks of mountains on either hand : starry roof stretched above : Dee, unseen, rustling below. But soon a change came over the face of heaven, sheets of ruddy flame, spears of silvery fire, darting and flickering, rising and waning across the whole visible space of sky ; a spectacle that did not speedily vanish, but continued, with occasional increments of splendour, for several hours of the night. I sat on a wall near some poor cottages, and thought of the birth of Owen Glendower—

The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes.

A boy came out, and afterwards an old woman and a young one, two little children, and a man, all of whom, seeing me gazing on the fiery sky, gazed also, and spoke to each other in Kymric. I accosted them, was answered in foreign English, and found the *Aurora Borealis* ('clouds of fire' they called it) was to them an altogether strange phenomenon. They said they had never seen it before (so little notice had they taken), and they had no guess of its nature. The younger woman, very comely, and of sweet modest demeanour, was a carpenter's wife and mother of the two children. She had never been out of Llangollen. Here in short in 1870, in a suburb of this tourist-haunted village near the English border, were Kymri, using their old speech, and not much removed mentally from the condition of their ancestors of five hundred or a thousand years ago.

The Kelts of Wales and the Kelts of Ireland have always had points of strong resemblance, many of which continue evident in the living generations. Each uses a branch of the same antique speech, tends to keep itself segregated from the surrounding Saxons, and loves its old histories and genealogies, traditions, legends, and poems. Both have a natural ease and courtesy of manner, the very antithesis of English bluntness ; and the blunt Englishman still, as of old, calls them both 'deceitful.' Both are

vivacious and hot-tempered ; but in the Welshman appears little of the peculiar fun and humour of his Irish cousin. One might suspect for this the Calvinistic Methodism which has oddly supplanted Catholicism among the British Kelts, but perhaps that has little to do with it. The old music of Kymru, though she learned much from Erin in this delightful art,¹ is graver and loftier than that of the Western Isle, and with little or no trace of the liveliness and drollery so common in Irish tunes. When the learned and accomplished Bishop known as *Giraldus Cambrensis*, Welsh Gerald, visited Ireland among the first English invaders, he found the people ‘incomparably more skilful in playing on musical instruments than any other nation I have ever seen. Their modulation on these instruments, *unlike that of the Britons to which I am accustomed*, is not slow and austere (*tarda et morosa*), but lively and rapid, at the same time sweet and jocund of sound.’²

As Danes and Swedes differ much in some national characteristics ; Spaniards also and South Italians ; so do (and did long ago) the Keltic Irish and Keltic Welsh. Yet are they cousins for all that, with a common form of civilisation, which has struggled down to our own day and is slowly dying out among the mountains and by the rocky shores of Caernarvon and Connemara ; in Bretagne also, and the Scottish Highlands : an older form of civilisation than that of modern Europe, into which it has transfused many influences — a venerable, lovable, deeply interesting form of civilisation—but no longer fitted, or even adaptable, to the affairs of life. From Llangollen I went to Dolgelly.

Dolgelly (pr. ‘Dolgethla’) looks old as Baalbec. Cottages solid and firm as though rock-hewn, built of huge gray blocks, and roofed with gray flagstones, crouch among their valley woods, under the shadow of the Giant’s Chair.

¹ Giraldus, etc.

² *Topog. Hibern.* iii. c. xi.

Through the irregular cluster of human dwellings go various crooked lanes, with unexpected bye-passages. In one of these passages is a low, solid, simple old gray building, where they say Owen Glendower held a Welsh Parliament as King of Wales. I liked it better than that wilderness of fripperies called the New Palace of Westminster. Several watercourses—here a rocky brook, there a swift runnel—accompany or traverse the devious ways, and are crossed on a flag of rock or stepping-stones. At length some crooked path leading upwards brings you out on the slope of the wooded hills, mountain-tops peeping above, green vale spread below, with groves and winding river. ‘Dolgelly,’ I am told, means ‘Hazel-dale.’

These fortress-like Welsh cottages might often be cleaner, no doubt. They have not the English trimness, but neither do they attain the characteristic squalor of Irish poverty. Amid fresh air, broad space, bright water running from the hills, their sanitary defects must be of an easily removable kind. Small sleeping-rooms are probably their worst feature; and it is very hard to persuade people of the advantage of an open window. At worst, how incomparably better seems the lot of a child born in one of these little gray stone cottages, to that of one whose first experience of earth is the smoky twilight and polluted air of a Liverpool or London alley!

As to scenery: is a human being any the better or happier (surely this is tautology!) for living his earliest years in view of fair or noble landscapes—mountain, moorland, lake, river, forest, brook and meadow-land, sea-shore? The question, surely, carries its own answer. It is true that you seldom find the peasant, when left to himself, praising any scenery, or even consciously noticing it. He is not accustomed to reflect, and much less to express reflections, save on the most practical matters; and besides he, like the rest of us, takes for granted what has always

been around him. Still his life is the better for the beauty, as for the pure air which he breathes without knowing it. He would soon miss both. I heard once of an old woman at Ambleside, who was born and had lived sixty years in that village, and who used to wonder what brought so many gentlefolk from distant parts. A son of hers, living in Staffordshire, in 'the Black Country,' took ill; she went to nurse him, and on her return the old lady remarked to one of her neighbours, 'Ah! now I ken why folk coom this way for pleasure.'

The immense joy and curiosity of childhood can keep even the gutter-child merry; but Town fails to supply those sources of simple and innocent pleasure so lavishly and perennially provided in the broad, subtle, endless variety of natural beauty, and offers in their stead artificial and unwholesome stimulants which drug the mind against the surrounding ugliness, and soon ruin all its freshness. Old age, gentle and contented in a humble state of life, carrying at threescore and upward a certain unspoilt child-like sweetness in face and in mind; this you find in the cottage or secluded hamlet, lives wrapt in beauty and peace, not in the great city.

There are compensations, you will say. Peacefulness of heart: is there any compensation for the loss of this? The beauty of every peak and dip of the mountain-range, of every ripple in the brook, and every leaf in the wood, is not related to man's spirit in vain. That child has the worser lot (whether he suspect it or no) who is born and bred in a great modern town. But I do not say that scenes of remarkable beauty are necessary to every one's education, or that those who live among these must gain the most. All natural beauty has an infinite quality; and something very quiet and moderate (if unspoilt) is enough to fill most cups with satisfaction. Let us all see, if we can, the astounding beauty of which Nature,

at her best, is capable, and receive thence what we can of joy, reverence, and hope. But we are not all of us fit, we are none of us at all times fit, to meet these higher degrees of Nature's manifestation with due power and fineness of reception.

Sweet to me seems this poor grass-bordered village lane in the morning sun—enviable the children coming along to school under the rustling leaves, and across the stepping-stones of the brook, the little ones helped by the elder. One of these maturer persons, of the age of about seven, a little girl, is half coaxing half towing along a littler brother, perhaps four years old, he sobbing and be-blubbered with tears. 'What's the matter?' I ask; for the Welsh children nowadays all learn English. 'Oh, she's a dreadful bad chile!' says the girl, speaking of her little brother; 'she do always cry going to school.' The principles of English grammar have not sunk in here very deeply as yet. But the mistake is not surprising when we know that the Welsh for 'she' and 'her' is *hi* (pronounced 'hee'), which naturally causes some confusion in the mind of a child of two languages. The little girl associated the sound 'hee' now with feminine, now with masculine, but most with the former. *Ef* is Welsh for 'he.' But though the children are learning English, the public is still Kymric, and must be appealed to in the old tongue. Here at the little stationer's shop in the market-place is a newspaper placard bearing, in large type, among announcements still more unintelligible to the foreigner,

GELYNIAETH Y PRWSSIAD AT Y FFRANGOD GOCHELWCH Y
TWYLLWR.

And in the railway waiting-room a pious text admonishes the native:

NODFA SIER.

'*A oes neb yn eich plith mewn adfid.*'—*Gweddiad.*'

Iago, v. 13.

C—2

‘Iago!’—but know, ignorant Sasnach, this is not a quotation from Shakespeare. After all that can be said against difference of tongues upon the earth (Babelism—babble), this ancient speech does add much to the piquancy of a Welsh ramble. As to the natives; that they should cling fondly and angrily to their mother-tongue is no wonder; that love has even deeper roots than the love of fatherland. Let Kymric, let Gaelic, fade away from men’s lips, as fade it must, gently, quietly, unreprieved, not unregretted. Nay, I admit not only the piquancy, but that the knowledge more or less of two languages tends in itself to educate and stimulate the mental powers. It would be hard to find on the round earth a human creature of less vivacity of mind than the ordinary English lowland peasant, and doubtless his dull monotony of speech reacts upon his intellect.

And yet I must hold to my creed: it is best that mankind be drawn together, and first those that are neighbours.

Road, field-path, moorland and heather, steep stony ascent, bare plateau, final climb among rocks to the culminating cairn or heap; and here I sit in the seat of the Giant Edris, and the guide informs me, with a smile, that if I pass the night here I shall be a poet in the morning. This is an old saying of Snowdon, but also perhaps fairly belonging to Cadair Idris, as one of the noted summits of the land of Bards and Prophets, and in which commonly

the name
Of Bard and Prophet was the same.

The rhymed prophecies attributed to Merdyn—whom the Saxons call ‘Merlin’—and those of later-born rhapsodists, have always taken fast hold of Welsh memories

and imaginations; enthusiasts and plotters used them largely in keeping alive the national spirit of opposition to the foreigner and the hope of his final expulsion; and wandering minstrels and reciters helped to carry the seeds of insurrection after insurrection through the old mountain-land.

The incidents of the climb and the prospect from the top were not notably distinguishable from many other similar experiences of mine in the mountainous parts of the United Kingdom. The day was overcast; all round spread a sea of dark-swelling, barren hills; northward, in the gray clouds which dimly curtained the horizon, stood the ghost of Snowdon; southward, the phantom of Plynlimmon; these and Cadair the three chief landmarks of the Kynry. Dark woods in the distant valley, the estuary winding down to Barmouth sands (but the sea was mingled with the gray skies), at our feet a precipice with vast semicircular sweep, a mournful solitary tarn below—this is what I recollect. ‘The land of Merioneth,’ says Giraldus, ‘is the roughest in Wales, so full of steep mountains and deep valleys that the shepherds can talk to one another from summit to summit; yet, would they meet, a whole day would scarce suffice for the journey.’

We descended by ‘the Fox’s Path,’ very steep, the shingle slipping and rattling down at every step, and an alpenstock highly desirable, and saw the place, at foot of a high rock, where my guide about six weeks ago found a gentleman lying with his leg broken. He was an Oxford tutor, who walked all by himself to the top of Cadair from Barmouth, where he was reading with some pupils, and tried, too adventurous, to descend by a tempting cranny near the summit. (I saw it on my way up.) This was late on a summer’s evening. The seeming path led down at last to an impassable face of rock: he fell, and lay on a ledge lower down with a broken leg till near

the middle of next day, when my guide, taking a party up, saw a handkerchief waving and made his way to the spot. The learned but rash gentleman was carried to Dolgelly, where I am told he now is, convalescent and walking about with a stick. Moral: though you be a member of the Alpine Club itself, despise not even a Welsh mountain, or you may find 'twill do, 'twill serve,' as Mercutio says.

I found next day, for my own part, a certain pathway called the Precipice Walk, in the grounds of Nannau Park, quite enough for me in the way of 'fearful joy'—in fact a little too much. It runs for some miles round a vast hill-side, not a mountain, but with sheer steep slope to the valley of, I should guess, five hundred feet at least—unfootable slope of rough grass sprinkled with stony *débris*, down which, your step once slipping from the narrow and often broken path, you must roll with furious and perhaps fatal rapidity. The path is cut across the slope, a slender horizontal band following the ins and outs of the huge hill-side, and here and there passing round rocky corners on bits of causeway built up of loose shingle.

Several of these I passed without liking them very much, for each rough little slaty heap, only a few inches wide, and half of it already fallen, rattled and slipped in the most 'onsatisfactory' manner. But, hang it! thought I, have I not walked in the Alps? This is one of the regular easy little things, for ladies and children. Murray recommends it in that tone. At all events, I must now have got over the worst bits? By no means: here is a corner about thrice as bad as any behind me, and what may lie beyond it? perhaps some absolute impossibility. Now I abhor turning back—giving up a resolve; but I had felt low and megrimish at starting; the pathway was probably the worse for some recent slips; there was evidently a real chance of

my breaking my bones; I thought of the Oxford tutor at that moment limping about Dolgelly; and, in short, turned back in no happy humour, crept over the ugly little dangerous piles of slate, and lay at last in a ferny field, viewing, but not enjoying, the noble landscape of the estuary winding down to Barmouth sands, mountains right, and mountains left, rising out of rich woods:

I see, not feel, that it is fair.

On my way up the long and shady avenue of Nannau Park I had overtaken a decent woman carrying a basket, who directed me to the Precipice Walk aforesaid. ‘You are not Welsh?’ I observed. ‘Oh no, sir! English.’ Her husband (employed at Nannau) and she had come hither some years ago from Shropshire, and she would fain be back there. She had no good word for the Welsh; they were deceitful; they disliked all English folk, made no friendship with them, and cheated them when they could. She could not even buy things in a shop without paying more than the natives did, for she could speak no Welsh. How persistent are national characteristics and prejudices! Here is a woman from the next county who feels herself to be an exile in a strange and unfriendly land. I have had many other evidences of the same fact, that the old jealousy between Saxon and Kymro survives, and is influential throughout the Principality to this day. Prince Howel (about 1170) who has a high place among Kymric poets, says in one of his pieces called *Gwladgarwch Hywel*, ‘Howel’s Delight,’ ‘I hate Loegyr (England), a flat and lazy land, with a people full of guile! I love the land abounding in mead; I love its sea-coast and mountains, its cities bordering on forests, its fair landscapes, its dales and waters and glens, its fields clad with the tender trefoil, its white seamews and beauteous women, its warriors and well-trained steeds! . . . I love the marches of Merioneth, where my

head was pillowed on a snow-white arm ! I love the nightingale in the privet copse in the famous vale of 'Two Rivers!' [*Cymmer Deuddwfr*] etc. A lyric full of character and beauty, so far as one may judge. In return, 'deceitful' was a favourite English epithet for the Welsh many centuries ago. Shrewdness in money, another quality assigned to them, seems of modern acquirement. Perhaps it came in with Methodism, whose ingenuity is well known in dealing with the problem 'How to make the best of both worlds,' as the tract puts it. The Methodism and the 'cannyness' of Wales make an odd mixture with the Keltic warmth of mind and manners, which are also certainly there.

I like the manners myself, the tone of voice, the foreignly accented English, dwelling on the last syllable of words. There was a Welsh girl of fifteen to-day, with a companion, in the train to Barmouth, a bright, happy-looking creature, who entered into conversation with me, as to scenery, etc., with a noble, obliging frankness and ease which the highest breeding could not have outgone. 'Did she speak Welsh?' 'Oh yes!' 'As well as English?' 'Far bet-ter!' Then she read at my request a paragraph from *I Goliad* ('The Light'), the newspaper I had bought in leaving Dolgelly, and translated it. Finally, she directed me on which hand to turn after going out of the 'sta-tion'—(I remember that word especially, with its prolonged last syllable,—but not French-like; broader and sweeter), and I wished we could have been fellow-travellers longer.

From breezy little Barmouth, with the steep bank at back of its houses and the sands in front, I walked across the endless wooden bridge over the estuary and waited awhile in the queer little wooden station overlooking the sea, listening in vain to the talk of the people, and vainly trying to read the placards in the same unknown tongue which were hung upon the wall. Then the fiery horse drew us swiftly away, sea-waves ever on the right hand and barren brown

mountains on the left ; with now and again some dull little slated village, built usually where the dell of a river or brook opens to the shore. Dusk was come by the time we turned inland at Aberdovey, and the lights of Machynlleth gleamed among the dark hills as we paused there and dropped several passengers. 'Machynlleth?' Did I ever hear of it before? Yes, 'tis a famous old name; Owen Glendower was crowned there as King of Wales; but it might have been an owl-haunted ruin nowadays for aught I knew. Yet a town it certainly is, with streets and gas-lamps, and people live there to whom it is the most important place in the whole world. A native of Machynlleth, a little boy, is peeping in at the station door; I see him, he sees me; and then away we dart into the night for Shrewsbury, and the little boy goes home into Machynlleth. Plynlimmon Mountain is close at hand on the right, but, to my grief, invisible in his cloak of darkness. Llanbrin, Montgomery, Welsh-Pool, flit by unseen; and about ten by Shrewsbury clock we sweep in among the walls and lights of that famous old border town on its broad hill (like a cow's back), nigh enclosed by the winding Severn. Uphill crawls the 'bus and lands us in the unknown High Street at an inn-door. But they are full. Stay, there's one bedroom. 'A quiet one?' 'Very,' says the housekeeper. A handmaid shows it—small, with one window giving on a narrow court. 'Is it really and truly quiet?' said I confidentially, perhaps plaintively, 'no noise early in the morning? I'm but a poor sleeper.' The housemaid looked at me: she was a mild, thin, quiet-faced woman of thirty or so. 'Well, there's a brazier's shop in that court, sir, and they begin at daylight: you'll not mention that I told you?' It was a bit of true kindness. I think she was an Englishwoman; and might generalise boldly on national character, after the manner of Count Smorltork and other celebrated travellers.

I tried two other inns before I got in at the George, opposite that huge new Market-House which looks so raw and ugly in the old street. Supper ordered, I set out for a stroll, late as it was. It must be very late, or I must be very tired, when I forego this first ramble in a new place as soon as possible after arriving. There was the very long narrowish old High Street, with ups and downs, crooks and bends, and off it many cross streets and bye-ways, with ancient gable-fronted houses, and dim church spires lifted among the stars. On the corners were some delightfully quaint names—Mardol, Dog-Pole, Frankwell, Murivance, Wyle Cop. A passage led me out on what I guessed to be part of the old walls (useful many a year against the Welsh), the battlements looking down first on gardens and fruit-tree tops—but without a moon to silver them to-night—and then on the dim valley sprinkled with lights, some of them reflected in a winding of the river, else unseen.

Next morning from my bedroom window I heard two men talking in the stable yard below. They spoke English, and this actually gave me a little shock of surprise, after four days in Wales.

By daylight I perambulated again the close-built streets of Shrewsbury, and admired its lofty gabled old mansions—Ireland's House, Butchers' Row, and many more. In the old Market-Square I found still safe (and thought it a piece of luck) the old Market-House, stone arcade below, mulioned windows above, a rich old gray thing with Queen Bess's arms on the west front. And close by stands the statue of a man who extended England's physical dominion in the earth to an extent that not Elizabeth nor her poor servant Mr. William Shakespeare ever dreamed of. Robert Clive, obscure Shropshire boy, M.P. for Shrewsbury, conqueror of India, peer, and suicide.

I walked over the 'Welsh Bridge,' its defensive tower and gateway now gone; and saw far off from higher ground

the blue tops of mountains, to which the Shrewsbury folk must often have looked with apprehension as the haunt of the marauding and murderous Welsh. No doubt Shrewsbury nurses and children knew well the ditty :

Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief ;
Taffy came to my house and stole a piece of beef ;
I went to Taffy's house—he was not at home ;

(which was indeed the usual state of the case)

Taffy came to my house and stole a mutton bone ;
I went to Taffy's house, Taffy was in bed ;

(caught for once)

I took the mutton bone, and beat him on the head.

A one-sided statement, certainly ; but founded on facts too familiar to the borderers.

The long High Street climbs from the ugliness of a vast Railway Station and runs crookedly along the hill-back to the pleasantness of a richly wooded public garden, with fine linden-trees. Halfway or so, stands Shrewsbury Castle, of dark red stone, now a private residence, part old, part modern, built on the spot¹ where stood the mounded and palisaded British fortress of Pen-gwern [Head or Hilltop of the Alder Wood]. Pen-gwern was the capital of the Kymric realm of Powys. The Saxons drove out the Kymry, built a fortress of their own here, and named the place Scrobesbyrig—Shrubby Fort, as it were—now turned into ‘Shrewsbury.’ The Kymry of Powys fleeing farther into the mountains set up their head place at Mathravel in Montgomeryshire, and kept it there many centuries.

Around the house-crowded hill, shaped like a cow's back, Severn coils, making it almost an island, the Welsh bridge to the west, and the English bridge to the east. Over the latter on your way to the huge station you catch a glimpse

¹ Giraldus, *Descriptio Kambr.*

of the beautiful old Abbey Church, and a rich stone pulpit standing alone in a garden close by. Then away with whistle and roar, and the town, the castle, and lastly St. Mary's tall spire, are soon lost sight of.

I speed to Hereford ; thence to Ross ; and launch on the Wye early on an autumn morning ere the mist has lifted from the beautiful river and its wooded shores. Down we glide some fifty miles, on the stream that once divided Wales from England ; with time to think of old Kings, Princes, Bards ; of Edward Longshanks ; of Owen Glendower ; and to meditate on the nature and fate of the Keltic phase of civilisation.

RAMBLE THE THIRTEENTH.

DOWN THE WYE.

BETWEEN Shrewsbury and Hereford you are no longer in a mountainous region, with rocks and barren summits, but among hills, pastoral or woody, with many an orchard in their hollows. 'Ludlow' is a most tempting name—

Sabrina fair !

Listen where thou art sitting

Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave—

but I must on. The hills have sunk to a plain of woods, farms, and hedgerows, ere we arrive at Hereford. What is this ancient city like? Stepping from the station I find a wide road with several 'omnibii,' a timber and coal-yard on a canal; the roofs and chimneys of a flat city with a square four-pinnacled tower rising among them, and elsewhere two sharp spires. It is an agricultural city, of broad commonplace streets, with here and there an old house, and to-day was full of market-folk and their belongings—market carts in every gateway, broad-shouldered farmers at windows, countrywomen with baskets of fruit, fowls, and so on. I saw the Cathedral too hastily. It did not please me much. The look of the Close, in which stand some fine elms, is ruined by a new deanery of disgraceful ugliness; and much 'restoration' (better called *restauration*, that is, modern cookery) has been applied to the Cathedral. The east end, with its raw new stone, has no sweetness now. The west

front and west window are very poor. Inside, the ceilings of the centre aisle and side aisles are painted in really execrable taste. The very fine north window is filled with bad glass. The rich tower, however, stands unspoilt, and many interesting bits of Norman work remain. On the whole it is the least delightful English Cathedral I have yet seen, thanks mainly to the *restaurateurs*. There is a story of a certain boatswain in the navy, a good officer, but who used to swear very hard at his men. Being ordered by a scrupulous captain to omit his strong language, Tom at first despaired of managing; but by-and-by hit on this harmless formula in speaking to an offender, 'Bless your eyes, you rascal—you know what I mean!' I wish I knew the name of the architect of the Hereford Deanery, especially if he be also the *restaurateur* of the cathedral: bless his eyes!

Having only an hour or two for Hereford, and wishing to make direct for certain points, it occurred to my mind, not for the first time, how convenient it would be if in every railway station were hung up a map of the city, town, village, neighbourhood, for the new-born visitor (so to speak) to consult, with a scale and table of distances, and the chief objects marked say in red. One cannot buy and carry about the world special maps of everywhere; yet even a glance at a special map is often a special benefit. If the Companies will not do it, let some good Man, whether of Hereford, Ross, or elsewhere, set the example in the railway station of his own town.

The Wye at Hereford is but a little river; thrice our iron road crossed it, winding through the warm quiet fields. Evening sunset gilded the tall sharp spire of Ross on its rising ground, and the meadows, hedgerows and orchards which encompass the little town, as I rambled up the High Street, passing 'the Man of Ross's' house, and into the churchyard with its lofty poplar avenue leading down to the fields. Mr. John Kyrle's grave is in the chancel within: he

died in 1724, ninety years old; but I had not come to see his house and grave. I own the title 'Man of Ross' rather bores me, and I do not particularly admire Mr. Pope's well-known lines which have advertised the local philanthropist so prodigiously. There is nothing very noticeable in Ross till you come out at the upper part of the street, and find the Wye beneath you, with its lawny meadows and woods.

Ross is still a small town and likely to remain so, its chief traffic being of summer boating-parties on the Wye. The Irish town of Ross, in county Wexford, is also on a beautiful river, the Barrow. *Ros*, in Gaelic and Kymric, means a 'wood'; and hence probably the name of both towns (the word also means a 'point' or 'promontory'). The name *New Ross*, as the Irish one is often called, was not given to distinguish it from its Herefordshire sister, but from an Old Ross, now a little hamlet, some three miles distant from New Ross. The two rivers are perhaps much of a size above tideway. But at Irish Ross the Barrow is a broad, deep tidal stream, with muddy borders and inlets at ebb; at English Ross the Wye is clear, shallow, pastoral, unsalted.

The inn I chanced to put up at was of the ancient, dusky, close-smelling, frowsy, feather-bedded kind. I do think we moderns are improved in the matter of bedrooms at least. I tossed, heated and unhappy, and (as people do in the Arabian stories) repeated some appropriate lines:

Sad is his fate who tumbles ill at ease
On fusty feathers filled with furious fleas.

But my Essay (an important one) on Bedrooms and Sleep must wait another opportunity.

The night and its troubles came to an end; and here is an autumnal morning, and the Wye (once boundary river of Wales and England) flowing softly through his misty

meadows, with many a poplar and many a willow. My boatman, a straight handsome six-foot man of thirty in shirt and trousers, took his oars, and down the fair stream we swept towards Wilton Bridge, of red sandstone, with a sundial set on one of its six beautiful round arches; a ruined castle close by, dismantled by the Roundheads. The mist cleared, the day warmed, cows stood in the river, the clear water flowed over an endless bed of waving green weeds. One weed, the boatman tells me, which was unknown here till a few years ago ('We call it the American weed'), has grown so fast and thick as almost to choke up some of the channels. Over the waving green we glided, and over gray flags of rock, our shadow gliding beneath us; down dancing rapids, keel sometimes scraping on the stones; round corners into deep slow pools among withy beds; under the shade of tall elms, and out into the broad sunshine of river lawns; by farmhouses, hamlets, orchards loaded with red and yellow apples; and anon between steep woody banks, mountains of dark green foliage rising from the water's edge.

Ladders of light fall through the high-heaped woods. We are passing modern Goodrich Court, and ruined old Goodrich Castle (which held out long for King Charles)—a noble situation, a chivalrous-sounding name. Sir Samuel Meyrick built Goodrich Court in 1828, and filled it with specimens of ancient weapons and war-gear. Some great London money-changer lives there now. 'Tis the age of stock-broking. Do I wish back again the times when we wore suits of iron—when no gentleman went out of doors unarmed? No. But answer me in turn—has stock-broking and money-marketing put an end to war? War is now on a greater scale than ever before in the world, and much more mechanical. Science has applied itself with great success to the development of man's powers of destruction; and banking, with its foreign loans and other

contrivances (for which labour must bitterly pay in the end), enables kings and ministers to undertake almost irresponsibly the prodigiously costly operations of modern warfare, in which individuals are swallowed up like rain-drops in the sea. Well might we lift our hands in admiration (of a sort) at the machinery whereby the surpluses and savings of quiet English folk are transferred to a French or Russian Emperor to spend on more soldiers and cannon. But if a foreign loan gives us five, six, perhaps eight per cent., what do we know or care about Emperors and their politics? Our bankers, brokers—most respectable men. *A la bonne heure!* Only, if you should happen to lose every penny, don't come to me for pity. War, like most things nowadays, is made 'on credit,' in other words is in great part a gambling transaction. I would certainly as soon spend my blood in the cause of that great man who is at the head of affairs in the salon of Monte Carlo, as in that of the occupier of this or that throne I could mention.

Jonathan Swift's grandfather (of a Yorkshire family) was vicar of this parish at the time of the Great Rebellion, and also inherited from his father a small landed property at the village of Goodrich, vulgarly Gutheridge, on which he built a whimsical kind of a house.¹ The vicar siding actively with King Charles 'was plundered by the Round-heads six-and-thirty times, some say above fifty.' His church-living and his land were both taken from him by the Parliament. He died in 1658, leaving ten sons and three or four daughters, and his body was buried in Goodrich Church. His famous grandson put up a small slab to his memory, and also restored to the church of Goodrich a communion chalice which had been used there by his grandfather, probably hidden from the Roundheads, and had come down into the Dean's hands. Among Dean

¹ Anecdotes of the Family of Swift, by the Dean.

Swift's papers was found a sketch of the tablet, with some lines of doggrel verse scribbled on it. 'The paper is endorsed in Swift's hand, "Model of a Monument for my Grandfather, with Mr. Pope's roguery."' ¹ And thus run the verses :

Jonathan Swift
 Had the gift,
 By fatherige, motherige,
 And by brotherige,
 To come from Gutherige,
 But now is spoil'd clean,
 And an Irish Dean.
 In this church he has put
 A stone of two foot ;
 With a cup and a can, sir,
 In respect to his grandsire ;
 So Ireland change thy tone
 And cry Ohone ! Ohone !
 For England hath its own.

The river turns and returns, among great black yew-trees, more huge elms, more high-heaped woods with here and there a tinge of hectic. Yes ! here is the sad splendour of another autumn, unmistakeably beginning on the slope of variegated fern. The cawing rooks overhead are ware of the season ; and hark ! the robin's plaintive little dirge to the summer. One crow stood on a stone, looking intently into the river, and, my boatman said, fishing.

Here is the hamlet of Courtfield. The church where Harry of Monmouth was baptised was pulled down four or five years ago, and now we have among the river-side trees a new ugly church and uglier parsonage. Surely, to destroy any notable old building is to inflict a wound on the mother-country—a solution of continuity in its civic history and social life.

Down the clear stream we glide with regular pulse of oars, by orchards, by great walnut trees, by cottage and

¹ Scott's Memoirs of Swift.

croft. Anglers ply their skill from bank or punt. Water-hens run along the edge, and plop into shaded creeks. The sunlight strikes along the trees, shifting its side with the windings of the river. My handsome boatman, who does not prove to be intellectually bright, repairs the loss of that moisture which plentifully bedews his face and neck with copious beer, for which we stop at little riverside taverns oftener than is satisfactory. I had thought cyder to be the general drink of the country, but after tasting some of the ordinary kind, I could not wonder at anyone's preferring beer; it tasted mere crab-apples. My man is not married; his father, approaching seventy years of age, is still a vigorous boatman on the Wye; and this was all I could gather from him of personal interest. As to thoughts or opinions of any general nature, his mind seemed a blank. Contrary to Chaucer's scholar, he was neither desirous to learn, nor to teach anything; the ordinary Anglo-Saxon character. How full of talk, of theories and fancies, of curiosity and of information (whether exact or not is another matter), would an Irish pleasure-boatman probably be!

But my stolid friend did his day's work in a sufficient manner, though dull; nor failed to name the principal things as we floated down. Here on our left hand is the Forest of Dean; and now we glide under Coldwell Rocks, lofty walls of limestone hung with a thousand rich garlands, their clefts filled with dark verdure of hollies, mountain ash, and ivy; a picturesque and from time immemorial till now a peaceful scene. But the railway contractor, 'like a demon-mole,' has burrowed through the guardian hills, and a heap of rubbish already disfigures the river shore where his bridge is to be, bringing the yell of the steam-dragon to put every shy Naiad and Oread to flight. Now the river makes a sweep of some five miles round a great wooded hill. I land to cross

the ridge by Symond's Yat, or Gate, a walk of a third of a mile, and to catch the boat on the other side after its long circumvention. Up winds the path, across a meadow, by a little farmhouse (at its door a beautiful, placid young maiden with bright eyes, who looks the very impersonation of tranquil rustic happiness), then through a large orchard,—

What wondrous life is this I lead !
Ripe apples drop about my head ;—

the branches weighed down with ruddy and with golden fruitage, and plentiful mellow waifs lying scattered in the grass ; then a steeper ascent among trees and foliaged rocks, till the upper platform reveals its panorama, river on this side the hill, and river on that (another, yet the same), crags, woods, hills, lawns, orchards and meadows, villages and farms ; then down through more trees and apples to the boat.

Apples are famous in old British song. One of the poems attributed to Myrddin (Merlin) is *Avallennau*, 'The Apple Trees.' In the Isle of Avalon, *Ins-Afallon*, 'Apple Island' :

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,

Arthur was supposed to lie in long trance, till the time should come for him to lead his Britons to victory and happiness.

We rowed through St. Martin's Pool, the deepest in the river, 60 feet the boatman said, and full of salmon, and came to Monmouth, where we landed and lunched. It seemed to me a dull little agricultural town, with pretty views of the Wye valley and wooded hills. It is built on the angle between the Wye and the lesser stream Monnow, whence the name Monmouth—Monnow Mouth. In its market-place stands a statue of Henry the Fifth, born in this town 'August 9th, 1387,' which may or may

not be like the bold and cruel young King. His figure in Shakespeare's *Myth* has little warrant in history.

Below Monmouth we pass a rock in mid-stream, 'the Coman Rock,' boundary stone of the shires of Monmouth and Gloucester. A water ouzel dives. Dark yews stand by the edge, one thickly draped with clematis. Again rise steep slopes of variegated wood, and lines of castellated rock. The banks now are fringed with slime, left by ebbing salt water. Rounding a broad curve, we approach a muddy pier, a few scattered cottages, and a huge, gray, roofless gable rising among ash-trees and apple-trees on the rich river-holm; high wooded hills on every hand; daylight fading; a young moon appearing. We are at Tintern. I went at once to the Abbey.

Step through this ancient carven doorway. Hush!—
 How sweetly solemn rise the lofty walls,
 With pillar'd arches, window-traceries,
 And portals wrapt in ivy; overhead,
 In place of vaulted roof, the autumnal heav'n
 Of shadowy purple kindling into stars.
 The rain that falls upon the woody hills
 And orchards round, wets all the grassy floor
 Of nave and chancel, and makes flourish green
 This ash-tree springing in a pulpit's niche,—
 Wherein the robin may complete his song
 Begun on cottage apple-twigg, then fly
 Through the west window to those twilight woods.
 And like this house, the thought that built this house:
 A ruin'd, beautiful, and mournful thing.
 How gently mighty Nature and her truths,
 How softly, irresistibly, resume
 Their old dominion! So she takes these walls,
 Blending them with the grass and hills and woods,
 The flowing river and the starry sky
 Of Tintern Valley by the winding Wye.

But—even supposing I *could* help that way—Tintern has already had its good share of poetic celebration from Wordsworth. And here to another great Poet (he told

me so) came, one bygone Autumn, his famous lyric 'Tears, idle tears.'

Next morning I traversed the ruins by daylight, paying, not altogether willingly, another sixpence at the door to the representative of the Duke of Beaufort. Henry VIII. gave the abbey to the Earl of Worcester, and the Duke of Beaufort has inherited it, with much land beside. Then we rowed down to Chepstow, some five miles, under more steep woods and high rocks of a reddish limestone, quarried here and there, and their *débris* slanting to the river; and then under the walls of the great castle to a harbour amid the slime, where two or three coasting smacks aground represented the trade of Chepstow, and two or three loungers on the quay represented its population.

It is a meanly-built, sluggish town, on a hill above the Wye, crossed by a railway bridge. The tide, which rises some forty feet, fills the winding river into a broad stream, but at ebb leaves banks of sludge. It keeps its old Saxon name Chepe-stowe, 'market-place,' but it is no longer a good market for anything, and such is its intellectual poverty that there is no reading-room in the town.

The one interesting thing is the great old castle of the De Clares—of Richard De Clare, the invader of Ireland. The bye-name 'Strongbow' descended to Richard from his father and probably his grandfather. This is his castle of Strigul—in William's 'Doom-Book' (i.e. rate-book) 'Estrig-hoel,' a word of which I have not found the derivation. More accurately speaking, here is the site of Strongbow's castle, and here, no doubt, remain some of its walls, but embedded now and surrounded by buildings of two or three centuries later. We pass through gateways in the thick walls, and several courtyards, one shaded by a huge walnut tree: see the room where Jeremy

Taylor had lodging, and the tower which Henry Marten, 'the regicide,' inhabited as a prison for twenty years.

The walls are built out to the edge of the high limestone cliff, which drops to the river, straight as a wall. In one place a cave runs in beneath the fortress. The broad moat on the landward side is now a pretty dingle, with large ash-trees. Under the shade of these sat two little boys. One had bow and arrows; he had broken the string, and I found him a bit in my pocket to replace it. 'Have you ever heard of Strongbow (I asked), who lived in this castle long ago?' The little archer said 'Yes,' but could tell nothing further; the name Strigul was strange to him. If a Painter, sketching Strongbow's ruined castle, were to slip in a little lad with a toy bow shooting in the moat, it might be thought a pretty little touch of invention, or a silly affectation, according to the mood of the critic. Here it happened as matter of fact.

In the afternoon I walked out to the Wynd-cliff to see its famous view. The walk ran through a region of remarkable beauty, but from the moment of leaving the town I found myself hopelessly imprisoned on the side next the river and the scenery by a huge blank wall, about nine feet high. This bounds the domain of Piercefield on the western side, the Wye bounding it on the east. Coming to a gate-house, I asked permission to walk through the park, and out at the other end, but found this was only allowed one day in the week, not this day, so took to the road again and the half-mile after half-mile of stolid, stupid, relentless stone-wall. I relieved my feelings a little by composing an epitaph. Perhaps some one who knows the locality will be good enough to insert the right name. I am told that the present owner of Piercefield did not build the wall; yet he cannot be held entirely free from the responsibility of it:

EPITAPH.

‘Here lies, etc., etc., whose most memorable action was to build a very long and high stone wall on the banks of the Wye, near Chepstow, shutting out, as far as possible, the human race from the enjoyment of an extensive and beautiful landscape.’

At last, escaping from this truly vile wall, at least three miles in length, which had not even a loophole in it, and climbing a shady path, I emerged on the terraced rock of Wynd-cliff, and looked far and wide over a magnificent prospect—the woody precipice at my feet, the tortuous river and its hills, with the map-like landscape beyond; and then, over the treetops and the river-cliffs on the right, found with surprise another picture hanging as it were in the sky, a wider water (the Severn), its ships, and its faint coast beyond, with distant town and tower.

Down I went by steep zig-zags among the trees and underwood, and thought myself about to step out on the high road at foot, when I suddenly found myself in a kind of little tea-garden with a cottage at the end; then I recollected that the downward paths were here and there obstructed with brushwood or stakes, with the object, as was now apparent, of driving you inevitably into this net. The old woman, sitting within like the spider, soon came to her door. Did I wish for tea, or gingerbeer, or lemonade? ‘Nothing, thank you, but to get to the road.’ ‘The only way is through the cottage.’ ‘Am I to pay?’ ‘Well, it was always expected.’ ‘It is the Duke of Beaufort’s, I suppose?’ ‘Yes.’ So I gave his Grace a few pence again, got out on the road, and went on my way back to Chepstow.

Everywhere orchards loaded with apples, and often a great red and yellow heap of fruit on the grass by a cottage, exhaling warm fragrance; but I did not succeed in seeing a cyder-mill at work. For small quantities a hand-mill,

worked by two men, is used; then there is the horse-mill, hired out to various farmhouses in succession, here to-day, there to-morrow. This was the usual plan until our own time, and is still employed, but the steam-machine is superseding it. An old man along the road to-day tells me the cyder from the steam-engine's apples is not so good as that made in the old way; and this *laudator temporis acti* has a reason to give—'The steam-machine don't crush the pips, you see;' and he is very likely right. Quantity, not quality, is the aim in every department of modern productiveness. The cheap cyder is made of windfalls, and is poor indeed. If I were a rich man in this apple region I would, on the other hand, exhibit the culmination of cyder-making from picked and precious fruit (without the dead rot, declared by jocular tradition to be necessary for perfection), and regale my friends therewith. I would also send an anonymous dozen now and again to some poet or artist whom I felt grateful to, whose work was as pure and priceless as my apple-nectar. Also would I make that old drink, mead, metheglin—honey-wine, and, for the level of ordinary days, pure home-brewed beer; bidding all sophisticate concoctions avaut.

From Chepstow by rail to Gloucester,—British, Roman, Saxon: 'Caer Gloew' (which seems to mean Bright Castle), 'Colonia Glevum,' 'Gleau-ceaster.' The old city—where the Kings of England often held their court, and started thence to invade Wales, and received there the temporary submission of Welsh princes—stands in a plain; rich wooded hills on the south at two miles' distance, on the north some three miles or four. Two long old streets cross each other at the market-place. By the river, which winds in rather dull fashion through the plain, are wharves, warehouses, and masts. A swarm of mean modern streets keeps the country at arm's length. There seemed to be a good many Irish among the Saturday-night marketers and strollers, and I

noticed the treasonable Dublin newspapers of the week in a stationer's window. These are found wherever there is an Irish colony, and have a large circulation out of Ireland. The position of the Cathedral is not remarkable, and even its great richly-carved and pinnacled tower is not seen from many points of the Gloucester streets. The Close is trimly green and garden-like, but wants the venerable tranquillity of some. Scaffolding was up on the south porch, with workmen busily scraping and chipping. I care not to recall the name of the distinguished architect who has been charged with the *restauration* here—a name which in itself of course ‘guarantees’ everything that the subscribers could desire.

Close to the Cathedral, in a small churchyard, stands a modern Gothic monument to John Hooper, Bishop of this see, burned alive on this spot on February 9, 1555, at the age of sixty. He was brought down from London on horseback, reaching Gloucester on the fourth day at five o'clock in the evening (Thursday, February 7), and lodged at one Ingram's house, near the Cathedral. A cobbler at work in his shop, nearly opposite, pointed out to me the old house, and the window of ‘the Bishop's room’ at top. On the 9th, at nine in the morning, the weather cold, lowering, and windy, he was led forth between two sheriffs, leaning on a staff, for he had taken a sciatica in prison, but bearing a cheerful and ruddy countenance. It was market day, and some thousands of people were assembled. Having once more refused Queen Mary's pardon on condition of accepting the Catholic religion, he was stript to his shirt, and bound by an iron hoop to the stake, where he prayed aloud. Being tall, and also standing on a high stool, he was well seen by the people, who were sorrowful and weeping, but afraid to speak. A pound of gunpowder in a bladder was placed between his legs, and he held the same quantity under each armpit. Then the faggots and reeds were piled round him, and the fire put to

them. But the faggots being green and the day windy, he for a long time was but scorched, and called aloud, 'For God's love, good people, let me have more fire!' The powder exploded, but 'did him little good' (says Foxe). He raised his arms in attitude of prayer, till they 'dropt off.' After three-quarters of an hour his tortures came to an end.

What a scene! What a thing to meditate upon,—the mental attitude of the condemnators, of the condemned, of the people who looked on,—the subjection, the cruelty, the faith. But the chief person in the tragedy, among all his thoughts, could have found nothing *strange* in being burnt alive for an opinion.

The gray west front of the deposed Bishop's own Cathedral looked down on his agony, as it now looks down (300 years older) on his monument. But the churchwardens have it in hand.

Next morning I walked out through mean brick suburbs, and then in the sun and shadows of rural lanes and foot-paths, to Robin's Wood Hill, and saw northward the plain, the city with its noble tower, and the hills beyond; westward the broad Severn in a haze of light; eastward, at the foot of another rich hill, continuing the range I stood upon, the white villas of Cheltenham.

Brunel's masterpiece is the Great Western Railway—to do it justice, the most slovenly as to its stations, carriages, and servants, that I have ever travelled on. But it carried us safely up to Paddington.

RAMBLE THE FOURTEENTH.

IN DEVON AND CORNWALL.

WERE I forced to choose an English county, to keep within its bounds for say the next seven years, it should be Devon, I think; Devon of orchards and woods, rich vales and swelling hills, navigable rivers and swift brooks; wild Dartmoor, its centre-piece, heath-purpled, rock-crowned; two seas fringed with cliff and cove, sand and foliage; the gray pinnacles of Exeter; the glorious harbour of Plymouth;—Devon, moreover, mother of as comely, kindly and contented a brood of mortals as could be found elsewhere perhaps on any equal space of the terrestrial globe.

Exeter Cathedral has been for some years at the mercy of that terrible knight Sir Gilbert, and the bloom of antiquity is being carefully scraped off; but approaching from the north you can still see venerable gray walls and window-traceries, towers, buttresses, pinnacles, time-enriched. Can it be needful to repeat once more the true doctrine as to old buildings that are worth keeping?—*Preserve*, with prompt and constant care, all you can, even to the encrusting lichen: shudder at the word *Restore*! Into the old High Street a new wide opening has just been made from the south, otherwise it looks the same as when I first saw it eight years ago, Elizabethan picturesque porch of the Guild-hall bestraddling the pavement with dwarf pillars, and old bay-windowed gables rising aloft over modern shops.

Sloping up a long ridge it recalls here and there the famous Old Town of Edinburgh, and certain of the back lanes are almost as picturesque and odoriferous as the wynds of that northern city.

On the wings of Steam I fled along the fringe of Dartmoor, glancing down wooded valley and up rocky fell, by Okehampton and Tavistock, Ivybridge, and Plympton, and so, skirting a broad inlet of sea-water, alighted in the famous town of Plymouth.

This famous town looked dull enough, as I drove along in my fly, streets of common little slated houses, stuccoed or yellow-washed, walls and flagstones of coarse granite, all the forms mean and colours harsh. Afterwards I found better streets and some large public buildings, and a few bits of 'elde;' but no one should come to Plymouth for architecture. And no one who would see one of the most delightful places in England should fail to come to Plymouth.

From no description of others' experience can one anticipate his own. I am not sure how I shall be impressed by the person my friend so praises; nor whether the all-admired scene (admirable, I cannot doubt) will charm me. People and things with every praiseworthy quality may fail to charm; but Plymouth did not fail. Its many-branching harbour, wide to the blue sea, embraced by green hills, enriched with woods overhanging the rocky fringe, skimmed across by sailing-boats, and holding giant ships of war in grim repose; forts on every headland, the stronger for being unobtrusive; and, behind the spires and terraces and inland groves, purple-shadowed Dartmoor rising for a background,—Plymouth harbour, large, beautiful, various, where Tamar, Tavy, Plym, and many a stream and brook are mingled with the world-encompassing water; its shores warm with living human interest, and dignified with historic memories (Drake, the sea-dragon, little *Mayflower* out-

ward bound, among them) proved a very satisfactory experience.

The commercial and fishing port has its own characteristic bustle and picturesqueness. I like these, but if you do not, you may easily pass over Sutton Pool amid the vast harbour, or only see the little group of masts within its pier-head. Fishing-smacks, pleasure-yachts, merchant-vessels, men-of-war of every size and class move to and fro, or ride at anchor in the many channels, creeks, and bays. What is that swarm of boats doing this evening off Mount Batten? Catching mackerel. And round the point suddenly steams in among them a frigate with foreign colours flying, drops anchor, and then a puff of white smoke from her broadside, — boom! she is saluting the English Port Admiral with seventeen audible bows, slow and stately: ‘Good evening, sir!’ Then the citadel begins to answer in a still louder voice (‘Heavier metal, eh, Jim?’ complacently says one old sailor to another on the Hoe)—boom!—boom! boom!—seventeen deep lion-roars: ‘Glad to see you, sir!’ And finally the frigate fires five or six times: ‘Much obliged!’ ‘Umph!’ remarks my old friend the sailor, practically, in a hoarse tone, ‘the men’ll have to clean all them there guns to-night afore they knocks off!’ The annual cost of the custom of ‘saluting’ all over the world amounts to many thousands of pounds sterling, mainly, of course, paid by the taxpayer who sings ‘Rule Britannia.’ Forms and ceremonies there must and should be in all human intercourse. Individuals and nations must use them, both for prudential reasons and for the grace and dignity of life. But this does not imply that when a foreign ship of war casts anchor in Plymouth Sound, it is reasonable that forty rounds of cannon should be fired to say ‘Good morning!’ and ‘Glad to see you!’

Plymouth streets, I must repeat it after examination, are for the most part mean and ugly, and the gray granite is

cold and harsh in colour, or else covered with a hideous yellow wash. Two picturesque old half-timbered gables I found near Sutton Harbour, the tenements poor and dingy. By the great church stands part of an ancient building called the Abbey, now a store, and the church itself, St. Andrew's, in the main Perpendicular, was ancient until some three years ago, when Sir Gilbert took it in hand. He has not done so much here as in some other places, yet he has done so many things all over the building, inside and out, as to make it too fatiguing (I speak for myself) to decide whether it is or is not worth while now to be interested in it at all as a monument of the past.

Close by this church were standing till lately, we are told, certain 'massive and picturesque buildings of limestone and granite,' Hospital of Orphans' Aid (dated 1615), and Hospital of the Poor's Portion, a spacious quadrangle. These were 'destroyed to clear the site for the New Guildhall.' Before this (in 1800) an ancient Guildhall had been demolished, and another one built, but this proved too ugly and inconvenient to be endured. The new Guildhall, we learn, on the same authority,¹ 'ranks with the grandest civic buildings of the kingdom, and is one of the noblest examples of modern Gothic in the country.' The architects are of Plymouth; it took four years to build, and was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1874. The Plymouthians are constantly told that they are all very proud of this vast mass of stonework, and perhaps they are. Were I a Plymouthian I should never pass it without a shudder, or see its peaks afar off without a sting. The architects have almost miraculously succeeded in producing a group of huge, highly decorated, costly buildings, which, within and without, are at once mean and odd. This is the general impression, first and last. In the multifarious crowd of doors, windows, arches, pinnacles, some things may be better copied than

¹ *Guide*, by R. N. Worth, F.G.S., &c.

others, or less out of place, but specific criticism would be a joke. The Great Hall cannot help looking spacious ; the details are at once pretentious and paltry ; and its acoustic properties I heard condemned.

No such other town, hardly, as Plymouth for excursions, by land, river, and sea. One place, Ivybridge, twelve miles off, I was specially attracted to by its name, and the place does not belie it. Its high-pitched, ancient arch, hung with toadflax, polypody and thick ivy tufts, and shadowed by tall ash trees, still spans the rocky Erme. A spacious old inn fronts the narrow roadway, and an old stone mysteriously directs 'to Ugborough.' Paper-mill and railway viaduct have not succeeded in spoiling the glen of Ivybridge. You soon leave them behind, at a turn of the solitary woodpath, opening ever and anon upon the pellucid pools and foamy water-breaks of Erme, rushing among its huge lichen-spotted granite rocks, and under shade of moving branches : and climb gradually, if you go on, till the trees drop away, and wild, brown Dartmoor is round you with its lonely Tors, like deserted castles of dead giants.

Returning to Ivybridge, and facing westward again, the road in due time brought me near to Plympton Earl, which lies in a hollow sheltered by a high wood-clothed hill. A beautiful winding lane, deep and steep, and overshadowed with great trees, taking off to the left, brought me down into Sir Joshua's old town, and to the meeting of four ways. This great ancient house, with high fern-tufted garden wall, is now filled with mad people. There is the green-muffled fragment of the castle-keep on its mound ; here is the old granite church, scraped and spoiled ; and close by stands the Free Grammar School, where little Joshua sat many a day under the mild dominion of his own good father, the rector. The schoolmaster's house has lately been rebuilt, and all looks fire-new ; but the school-house, with its porch and arcade, is the same building that the Rev. Samuel Reynolds, and

many before him, taught the Plympton boys in, and little Joshua made a drawing of it in such good perspective that his father exclaimed, 'This is wonderful!' Better than school studies young Joshua liked attempting to draw on every scrap of paper he could find, and preferred to all his books a certain volume, which he may have found in his father's library, called *The Jesuits' Perspective*. He begged not to be made a doctor, and his father consented to bind him, as pupil, for four years, to Hudson, the most noted portrait painter in London; Joshua being then eighteen, already, doubtless, with notions of his own in art. He did not like Hudson's lazy way of giving him endless drawings of Guercino to copy; so they parted, not friendly, in two years' time, and young Reynolds came back to Devon, and set up his easel at Plymouth, where Lord Mount Edgcumb was his first patron, and Captain Keppel became his friend. This was in the year 1743. Three years later his good father died, and the young painter moved to London, and set up his studio in St. Martin's Lane. In 1749 his friend, Commodore Keppel, took him to the Mediterranean in his ship. In Minorca the painter was thrown by his horse and bruised his upper lip so that a scar always remained. He visited Rome, Florence, Venice, etc., and stayed abroad about three years and a half. On returning to England, after a short stay at Plymouth he went back to London, worked hard, and grew more and more in demand for portraits, fixing on his magic canvas a multitude of forms from the ever-moving procession of human life, and leaving fair women and famous men of England a hundred years ago visible and familiar to us to-day. It was in 1752, when the painter was about thirty years old, and the celebrated writer forty-three, that Reynolds made Dr. Johnson's acquaintance, at the Miss Cotterills' house, in Castle Street, Cavendish Square. Ten years later the Social Club (afterwards called the 'Literary Club') was formed, on our

Plympton painter's suggestion; and Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Garrick, Boswell, and their friends, supped once a week at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho.

In the same year in which the club was begun, Reynolds paid a visit of some weeks to Devonshire, and Johnson accompanied him. The Doctor, Boswell tells us, 'was much pleased with this jaunt, and declared he had derived from it a great accession of new ideas.' Most of the time was passed at Plymouth as guests of Dr. Mudge, the celebrated surgeon. 'The magnificence of the navy, the ship-building, and all its circumstances, afforded him a grand subject of contemplation.' A dockyard yacht carried them out to the Eddystone, but the sea was too rough for disembarking. Johnson met many of the Plymouth people, 'and was not sparing of his very entertaining conversation.' It was here he made the frank confession to a lady that he had defined *pastern* in his Dictionary as the knee of a horse, out of 'Ignorance, madam—pure ignorance.' Between the new town (now Devonport) rising near the dockyard, and old Plymouth, jealousies were already at work, and Johnson, passing visitor as he was, thought it his duty to take part with the Old Town, in which he was staying, 'and to *stand by* it.' He always spoke of *the dockers* as aliens and upstarts. Plymouth, thanks to Sir Francis Drake, has a copious supply of water from Dartmoor; the new town asked for a share. 'Johnson' (says Boswell), 'affecting to entertain the passions of the place, was violent in opposition, and half laughing at himself for his pretended zeal where he had no concern, exclaimed, "No, no! I am against *the dockers*; I am a Plymouth man. Rogues! let them die of thirst. They shall not have a drop!"' To which Mr. Blake-way adds that a Plymouth friend of his heard Johnson 'exclaim, with the utmost vehemence, "I HATE a Docker!"'—all which is very pleasant. The epithet 'Docker' is still

in daily use, and the jealousies of the two towns are by no means extinct.

In 1768 George III. founded the Royal Academy. Reynolds (now forty-five) was chosen President, and knighted. Mild, friendly, assiduous, he painted so many hours a day, made his 6,000*l.* a year, and gave the pleasantest dinners in London, though the table was often crowded to inconvenience. The hospitable old bachelor would say to his sister Fanny, 'We've eight people coming to dinner, my dear,' and in the course of the afternoon would ask perhaps eight more. Few were likely to refuse the chance of meeting such stars as Dr. Johnson, Burke, Garrick, and the certainty of easy and refined conversation, with the most delightful of hosts, who was also the most famous of living painters.

In the Plymouth Library (a good old-fashioned proprietary institution,—and the town has also a Free Library lately opened) are three interesting portraits by Sir Joshua; one of his father, side-face, a mild, intelligent, fresh-complexioned man, rather bald, slightly double-chinned; one of his sister Fanny, at about twenty perhaps, very agreeable, and even charming, with a sprightly softness, sweet eyes, and the lovely Devon mouth, which I see everywhere to-day in this fair land—firm, plump, well-drawn, with *a full upper lip*. To this mouth belongs of right a well-rounded chin, and the whole effect, at its best, is tenderly sensuous, dignifiedly simple, no touch of haughtiness or sensuality, a mouth such as the living model of a Greek sculptor might have had. In Suckling's famous *Ballad on a Wedding*, the most quoted lines are the description of the fair bride's mouth:

Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compar'd to that was next her chin;
(Some Bee had stung it newly.)

The poet's 'touch' here is free, flowing, and vivacious, but not sound. I never was in love with the stung under-lip;

and for the upper, though its thinness be but comparative, the epithet 'thin' should never have been allowed. 'Renny dear' had the true Devon mouth; and Joshua himself, I think, till disfigured by that horse mishap. He painted his own portrait not seldom, and this one is not of the best; very treacly, and as though in emulation of Rembrandt; moreover, it is a mere network of cracks. Numerous as the portraits are, it is not, perhaps, quite easy to have a definite likeness in one's mind's eye of Sir Joshua as he lived and moved. The portraits are *posed* a good deal; and some of the engravings, at all events, show a too regular featured and courtly looking personage. On a comparison of the various presentments, one finds that the underlying reality must have been much what Northcote describes: 'rather under the middle size, of a florid complexion, roundish blunt features, and a lively aspect; not corpulent, though somewhat inclined to it, but extremely active.' His manners, it is added, were 'uncommonly polished and agreeable,' and at the same time 'perfectly natural, simple, and unassuming.' To this add that he was cautious, and conciliatory, and rather fond of money.

Our gentle, busy, prosperous Plymptonian painted on, and grew richer, and grew old; and one day his eyes failed, and he laid down his brush; and not long after, his funeral procession entered the west door of St. Paul's, after nearly seventy happy years of mortal life, 1723-92.

Surely a true-born and successful Painter has one of the happiest of lots. His occupation is his choice and pleasure, and makes other people's pleasure too. His business is to seek out and enjoy the beauty of the world, and to add to its sum by the joyous labour of his own genius. There is room for continual progress. The conceptions of his mind take visible beauteous form by the quiet happy exercise of eye and hand, and at last go forth to the world, sure of gratitude, applause, and reward, with so much of immor-

tality in them as can outpass the present generation, and perhaps many more, and run on to no fixed limit. If one were asked to guess Who was probably the happiest man of the last century? it would not be easy to set up any rival name to that of Joshua Reynolds. His stock of bodily health was fairly good. He was fortunate from birth to death, and he deserved to be.

The town of Plympton is a place to be seen and remembered for its own sake; nestling among wooded hills, with its old houses stretching, here and there, across the footpath and resting on posts, and its gray garden-walls topped with fig and vine.

I forget which of his biographers says that when he saw Plympton he understood how Reynolds showed so much feeling for landscape. The very opposite thought came into my head—that it was curious how little feeling for landscape the painter showed, born and bred among these shady lanes and rich prospects. The smudgy brownish trees (generally streaked round the stem like birches), and the smeary blue distance, which make the background of a hundred portraits, answer the painter's purpose in colour, but have no inspiration from Devonian woods and hills. When he gives anything more definite it is a bit of some aristocratic park, with its bowers and balustrades, pleasure-pond and wilderness-walk. Reynolds, it must be owned, was conventional in all things. He sipped and enjoyed, always with grace, purity, and refinement (like many an amiable high lady of his sitters) the sweets of easy wealthy conventionalism, and painted in no other atmosphere. The simplicity and naturalness of his women and children are altogether those of the well-dressed and well-mannered circles: of the picturesque in real homely life, in anything connected with work or matter-of-fact, he had no perception, not the slightest inkling, or if he had, might as well have had none. He has tried indeed to paint shepherd boys and cottage girls; but these

are utter failures, or perhaps mistakes would be the fitter word for things which at no stage of their conception and execution could have had any promise or prospect of success. For humble and ordinary human life Reynolds as painter had, we say, no feeling; the ease and dignity which he recognised and relished so well were those of high breeding. Nor in this does he, as certain great Italians have done, suggest through all the fine bearing and rich robes the presence at last of a dignified or lovely Human Being; Reynolds's best women and children are very sweet, but still first and last they are the Honourable Miss or Master, Lady Mary or Lady Theodosia. But after all is it reasonable to complain that the chief fashionable portrait painter of his time should have a turn and a taste for painting high-life portraits? That Reynolds found and did his proper work in the world, who can doubt? And this is what we justly require of every man of genius, neither more nor less than this.

Another English painter, living at the same time, also found and did his proper work—William Hogarth. To compare and rank two men, each of whom has done his own work in his own way, is usually a frivolous and barren attempt. But one may be allowed to believe that at all events success and fame were more dependent on external circumstances in one of these cases than in the other. Reynolds came at a time when large-sized oil portraits were in vogue; the tide was running the right way for him, and he raced on the flood; his style in art, his manners, his social tastes and gifts, combined to a splendid success in this direction; almost from the first he had a constant succession of distinguished sitters, and the sitters were, so to speak, the complement of the artist in building up his reputation. He had no turn for landscape painting. *Genre* he tried, with very moderate success. Poetic and historic subjects with no better. His fame undoubtedly rests on his portraits, no little helped, as we say, by the distinction of so many of

his sitters. Hogarth's success was of a different kind, and in no degree dependent upon patronage. The sturdy man thought and wrought in the thick of common life and its various rude conditions—rather, it might be said, swam than sailed to his mark. Leave him health and a garret, nothing could have hindered his painting on, painting his best, and painting what he wished. He has given us excellent work, technically, good in drawing, good in colour, and much *sounder* in execution than Sir Joshua's; he shows amazing skill in composition, and in the union of breadth with detail. And he throws into the bargain dramatic plot and incident, character, humour, pathos, all rendered with the pungent simplicity of nature, yet under the proper conditions of his art. We have had (from Gainsborough for example) as good portraits as any of Reynolds's, and a new Reynolds, *mutatis mutandis*, is very conceivable; but no story and incident painter fit to compare with Hogarth has appeared, or seems likely to appear. But am I not slipping into the very attempt which I deprecated—to measure two men of genius against each other?

Joshua Reynolds's sweet temper is a Devonian characteristic. There are amiable people everywhere, thank Heaven, if you are lucky enough to find them. In Devon you can't miss them. Everybody is amiable and obliging. In country lanes and in Plymouth streets, whomsoever you accost, fear no frost-bite of a cold look or prickle of a rude reply. Courtesy and politeness are not the words to praise my dear Devonians with; there is no hint of the artificial, no suggestion of training, or possible *arrière pensée* of self-interest. Their good manners are not the French good manners, or the Irish good manners; have no admixture of wit or humour, or jollity, or curiosity, or whimsicality. All is simplicity, gentleness, kindness, obligingness, *bonhomie*, a draught of pure sweet milk, a day of mild sunshine. Never does the contrast which always strikes me afresh

on passing from London to the country appear so plainly as when I move into Devon—contrast between the multitudinous misery of hard, haggard, careworn, suspicious, anxious, insane, despairing faces, and the quietly happy, mildly contented, or peacefully resigned countenances which even poverty and old age present where man is not cut off from daily communion with nature, and all those diurnal and annual vicissitudes of earth and sky which mark and measure, stimulate and invigorate, soothe and adorn this mortal life. O fortunate! even if they do *not* know the good they have; and how far an ordinary rustic is conscious of any pleasure from the beauties of earth and sky it were hard to discover. He is not used to think upon such matters, much less to talk of them. Yet I doubt not a dim gratification and contentment flow to him continually: his face is the sure index. If from Decline of British Trade or any other cause, the streaming up of rustic life to mix in the foul whirlpools of our great towns shall one day cease and begin to reverse its movement, that change, calamitous in the eyes of some, will promise to the thoughtful an increase of happiness for the men, women, and children of a future generation, although Census and Budget may both mark a decrease in sums-total.

But to come back to Plymouth. ‘The Three Towns,’ as they are locally called (Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport), have together a population of say 150,000, and there are poor alleys and dingy corners in them, but every man, woman, and child breathes the sea-air, and lives within easy reach of green fields and woods. The ground undulates and runs out in rocky promontories into the vast branching haven. From the Hoe of Plymouth, from King Point in Stonehouse, from Mount Wise and from the Park in Devonport, superb and varied prospects unfold themselves, sea-bays, woods, hills, rivers; the huge

battle-ships at anchor, the merchant vessels sailing in and out, the pleasure boats gliding, the men-of-war's boats moving with regular pulse of oars; on every point and height near the water a battery, faced with granite or turf, grave, quiet, severe, ready for action at a moment's warning. The fortifications, numerous as they are, serve but to accentuate here and there the magnificent landscape, and to say you are looking on a chief Harbour and Sea-Fortress of the Mistress of the Seas. Nor is the boom of the great guns, in signal or salute, an unmelodious roar.

To crowded Plymouth, crowded Stonehouse is merely an adjunct; the passage from one to the other indistinguishable as that from Oxford Street to Holborn; yet they are governed differently, taxed differently, and represented differently in Parliament. The Tramway—that convenient shuttle weaving the Three Towns together—carries you smoothly from about the centre of Plymouth along level Union Street; you pass into Stonehouse without knowing it, and anon out of it again, over a bridge that crosses the creek, and you are now in Devonport, glide up through an archway in the fortifications, down the middle of a long grave dull street, and come to a stop near the Dockyard gates. Devonport has the Dockyard; Stonehouse the Victualling Yard, with huge range of granite building; Plymouth the Citadel and the commercial port. The Dockyard was begun on a very small scale, under Dutch William; grew, and a town grew behind it, and forts and bastions grew behind both, completed in 1853 says the Guide Book, 'as a line of interior defence, subsidiary to the great cincture of forts which incloses the Three Towns.' The tramway in crossing Stonehouse Bridge has carried us into a third system of local government and Parliamentary representation.

Plymouth and Portsmouth, two south-coast English sea-ports, naval and military stations, ought naturally to be

much alike in manners. But no; the similarities are over-powered (if not thus, I know not how else) by the difference between Hants and Devon. These differences between one county and another are very curious, and probably deep-rooted. The 'Home Counties' are tinged in their ideas and manners with London influence, fading out as you go farther from the centre; certain great provincial towns (Birmingham for example) spread a similar effect, in less degree; in the southern counties there are some considerable towns and cities, each with an urban character of its own, but no place possesses this radiating influence; the county influence remains distinct. The County of Hants, to which I am no stranger, is to say the truth not remarkable for pleasant manners. If you go on a zigzag among the Foresters or the Islanders, or where you please, do not expect in field or street much politeness and civility or much good-nature and sweetness, for in fact they are scarce; and if you escape rubs and snubs, think yourself lucky enough. You will grow accustomed to find people slow-witted, drawling-tongued, lumpish-mannered, not from any ill feeling, but because they are by nature the very opposite of vivacious, curious, and sensitive. The North Teutons who forcefully landed and settled hereabouts twelve hundred years ago were indeed a sturdy folk, but at no time from that day to this have they been praised for liveliness or politeness. Their influence, descended and derived, is still, indubitably, a living force; may it not also remain a distinguishable one in this their earliest settling-ground, where they lived for many generations, in their full Jutish flavour, mingling very slowly with any foreign elements? Sussex and Kent resemble Hampshire in manners, all mainly of the Teuton sort; but turn your face westward, and in Dorset you enter a milder *human climate*: I have often noted it. Pass on into Devon, in respect of manners you are in the midst of sunshine and wild-flower-fragrance;

and Cornwall is like to it. You are in old 'West Wales,' from which the sturdy Teuton was long excluded, and of which Mr. Freeman tells us, 'There can be no doubt the great peninsula stretching from the Axe to the Land's End was, and still is, largely inhabited by men who are only naturalised Englishmen, descendants of the Welsh inhabitants, who gradually lost their distinctive language, and became merged in the general mass of their conquerors. . . . The Celtic element can be traced from the Axe, the last heathen [i.e. heathen-Teutonic or heathen-English] frontier to the extremities of Cornwall.'¹

Need anyone be vexed to allow that the Keltic element in these Islands is a pleasanter thing than the Teutonic (however indispensable this), and that a large admixture of the former makes life sweeter and happier?

Hants and Devon are both English counties; but the characteristic manners of the one are, we venture to say, mainly Teutonic, of the other mainly Keltic. Cornwall's barren soil and mines have given her people a special tinge. Devon, rich, various, populous, is like a little realm in itself; and the ethnic mixture aforesaid, long nourished under English laws and habits, English peace and prosperity, has given English History some of its finest names, and shows to this day one of the best conditioned and prettiest populations anywhere to be found. How often one has to sigh—O, if, in the inevitable mixing and mutual modification of races, it had been Ireland's fate to suffer her necessary changes by means less dreadful than fraud, violence, hatred, and all the evil passions of man—these too not sweeping over like a storm, but exhaling like a slow miasma from polluted soil, and infecting one generation after another! To the natural sweetness of Keltic West Wales, England has gradually and surely added a large measure of strength and sincerity. The natural sweetness

¹ *Norman Conquest*, i. 34, 35.

of Keltic Erin has been doubly tainted by the effects of vain though endless struggles against foreign subjection and of too easy and complete submission to a priesthood; but though not so wholesome as it should be, its charm is not lost. If there seemed to be any chance of 'Home-Rule' making Ireland indeed more homely in the best sense, instead of Ultramontane, and more ruly in thought and act, instead of a thousand times more chaotic than ever, I would become a 'Home-Ruler' to-day.

Do you know the proverbial phrase, 'Working with *a dockyard stroke*'? It means working in an easy, lazy, lounging way, taking the longest time to do as little as possible. Dockyard men get their week's wages on Saturday night; if 'on hand' (as our American cousin says) and not glaringly idle, nobody much cares how little they do; if they worked till their fingers took fire it would not bring them an additional penny. Result, the proverbial phrase aforesaid. I walked through the Dockyard, amid ceaseless battering and rumbling, saw heaps of wood and of iron, men and horses moving, dry docks and wet docks, bridges and wharves, ships in all stages of progress, a few naval officers, and several Metropolitan policemen, for London lends a share of her police to our great naval and military stations. I had some conversation with an intelligent member of the Force. There are about 150 (I think he said) of the Metropolitan police in Devonport and Plymouth. Once sent down, they are generally kept here for some years, as new men cannot at once fit into the work. 'Do the men like coming down?' 'Most of them do not. It used to be done by volunteering, but now the men are ordered for this duty as required.'

One part of their business is to carry out what is briefly known as the C. D. Act. I remarked on the orderly state of the streets, by day and night, in spite of the swarm of

soldiers and sailors, and the multitude of drinking-shops. 'When I first came down here,' remarked my blue friend,— 'that was before the Act, you see—the streets was bad enough, awful sometimes.' 'Then you think the Act has done good?' He looked at me, and said with emphasis, 'Not a doubt of it.' 'Have there been complaints here of undue interference with the liberty of the subject?' 'Never. We interfere with nobody in the street, unless for disorderly conduct. If we see a girl tacking about, we watch her; then we find out where she lives, and warn her, or, as it may be, her parents or whoever she stays with. This is enough to keep most young girls from going on the town; and the old hands are far more cautious than they used to be not to give any public offence.' In return, I gave the constable my own evidence as to Portsmouth, before and after the passing this law; the crowd of harpies, old and young, waiting at the Dockyard gate when a ship was being paid off, and openly pouncing on the men; the roaring profligacy of the streets after nightfall, etc.; and the quietude now.

He entirely agreed with me, that never were well-meaning people more ill-judging than those who are so noisy for a repeal of this Act of Parliament.¹ It may, for aught I know, be susceptible of improvement in detail. It may not embody the best possible plan for its object. It may have pinched some innocent individuals, most laws do—(but where is the proof that it ever has?) One thing is certain—it has done a world of good. I am not going into the unsavoury discussion; but a question has been urged—why is all the severity against *women* only? which it may be worth while to answer plainly: because it is not unchastity that the law notices, but the Trade of Prostitution. This, which is not mere breach of morality, not mere vice even and profound individual degradation, but a crime against human

¹ Arbitrarily set aside by Mr. Gladstone, under the influence of female agitators, and against an overwhelming weight of experienced judgments.

nature—this, which is the companion of robbery and handmaid of disease, and in the fact of its existence a pollution, a horror and a shame, is to be allowed, forsooth, not merely to show itself publicly when and where it pleases, to offer freely its poisonous fruits for sale to all passers-by, but to occupy the principal streets of towns, and drive honest men and modest women off the pavement! The state of many of the chief thoroughfares of London and most of its railway stations, is at this moment a black disgrace to the English people and its rulers. The measure of public decency which prevails in the not-too-moral cities of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, New York and many others, cannot be unattainable in London. Our wives and sisters, our sons and daughters, ought to be able to walk on a fine night from, say, the Lyceum Theatre (or Exeter Hall if you prefer) to Charing-Cross Station without being elbowed, perhaps insulted, by Public Infamy. Our middies and green youths ought not to be thus met on the railway platform and at the street corner. The foolish servant girl out of place ought not to be able to plunge unchecked into fathomless shame by merely putting on her bonnet and walking into the nearest thoroughfare.

In Plymouth Sound, under the guns of the Citadel, lay a large three-masted ship, flying her Union Jack and ready for sea: no messenger of menace, destruction, and death: no sea-efreet created by men's wrath and fear, to deal and repel their mutual violence; but going on an errand of peace, work, and brotherhood. Some 600 men, women, and children, many of them of Cornwall, were on board, to cross the vast solitudes of ocean and try their fortunes at the ends of the earth, ten thousand miles from England, yet still with the British flag above them and the memories of home in their hearts. In those distant islands we call New Zealand are already many stout Cornish men and comely Cornish women, in Australia many, in the Cape Colony a

proportion, and I gladly heard reports of their well-doing under new skies. Granite boulders and the fitful harvest of the sea cannot feed many mouths, and the labour of gnomes is no longer profitable.

One bright morning found me in a carriage of the Cornwall Railway, and soon I was looking down at the Tamar and its battle-ships from Brunel's bridge, which carries you through the air straighter than a bird, and cost—what prodigious sum was it?—the shareholders know. A 'triumph of engineering skill,' this, but atrociously ugly, and with its foundations were laid those of the insolvency of the railway. The local newspaper I bought at the station happened to contain a report of the last meeting of shareholders. Nett result of the half-year's traffic (as of many previous half-years') a loss. Expenses and interest of debts have swallowed up all, and demand more money—more must be got somehow, for, except the Brunel bridge, your numerous other lofty bridges over river and ravine are wholly of wood, and (this was interesting to the passenger) are in many parts decaying and even dangerous. We cannot offer you the least 'dividend;' but, besides this, you must put hand in pocket afresh or your line will shortly tumble into ruin altogether! Our big neighbour 'the Great Western' offers, on hard enough terms, to take it and try to keep it going, but will not hear of allowing for anything like the cost of Brunel's triumphal bridge in its estimates. So we struggle on, for the present, as best we may, in a perfectly insolvent condition. Such was the Report, and one could only wonder whether the Company or one of its wooden bridges was likely to break down first.

For a good many miles from the eastern border, Cornish scenery is like Devon scenery, wooded hills and watered glens; then come bareness and ruggedness. Dartmoor is bare and rugged, but its solitary slopes and tors are full of charm; Mid-Cornwall is ugly, dreary, disfigured everywhere

with refuse of mines, bestrewn and blackened as with huge cinder-heaps; in short, one huge dustman's yard. And throughout this doleful land is one peculiar piece of architecture monotonously repeated; standing here on a grim slope, there in a slag-dishonoured hollow, anon rising ghastly on the harsh sky-line; a Square Tower with a turret at one angle, something like a border peel. It consists of four empty walls, with a large gap on one side, the turret is a broken chimney-stalk, the whole thing is the ruined Engine-House of a deserted mine-shaft. These unpicturesque, unvenerable ruins, mean, dingy, dismal, are dotted about over many square miles of the barren and melancholy region. You travel for hours and still see them round you, others and the same.

But all is not grimy desolation; grimy activity is still going on in a few places; wide chimneys are belching smoke, flame, and foul fumes, engines clanking and turning, black, ugly towns sprawling amid their dross-heaps. The prophet Isaiah conveyed this threat, among others, to Israel: 'I will take away all thy tin.' The tin of Cornwall is not taken away, nor its copper, but free-trade has brought an abundance of these metals from other parts, and helped to reduce the profits of mining here to little, to nothing, and to less than nothing. Hence the deserted shafts and the emigrant ships in Plymouth Sound. In any case, the long supremacy of Cornwall in tin was coming to an end, large and unexpected supplies of that metal having been found of late years in the Eastern Archipelago, Australia, Mexico, and elsewhere. Some of the mines are struggling on, their expenses screwed down to a minimum, in hopes of some turn of fortune.

A few still pay; one copper-mine within the border of Devon, the *Great Consols* by name, pays handsomely; thanks, in part, to the scientific skill whereby what was formerly thrown away as refuse is now made to yield a profit. I

went by steamboat up the beautiful winding Tamar one day, passing Pentilly Castle high in its woods, venerable Cotehele, the Mount Edgecumb dowerhouse (with furniture and tapestries untouched that were put in their places under Henry the Seventh): then climbed to the top of steep Morvell Rocks, half unsheathed from slopes of foliage, and reminding one of the Elbe above Dresden; and keeping along the upper level (river winding far below), I came at last to this prosperous Mine, which burrows into the hill-slope and under the river-bed, and deforms the fair surface with slag-heaps and slime-ponds, wheels, spouts, sheds, scaffolds, and trams.

I shall not describe it, save in one particular which struck me. Besides copper, iron pyrites are dug up. A man, armed with a long iron hook, pulls open an iron door, and you gaze with awe into the Dantesque heart of a huge fierce furnace, the white-hot contents slowly turning round, and ever falling in cascades of yellow fire. It is found that the sulphur in the pyrites is enough to keep the furnace, when once heated, a-burning without other fuel. The product? Here it is, a white heap of several tons of it lying in an open shed, where everybody passes by. It is something like fine flour. One of the men dips thumb and fingers loosely into the white powder, puts a quantity into the palm of his other hand, and brings it to us to look at, precisely as a miller shows a sample of flour, smoothing it with his forefinger. One expects every moment to see him test it with his tongue; a child probably would, but the miner knows better. All this white heap is Arsenic; all those rows of barrels are filled with Arsenic.

More than two thousand tons a year are sent out from this one mine, to be used mainly in those brilliant modern dyes by which our women and children can dazzle the sunshine at a cheap expense. Are they safe to wear? My chemistry books do not plainly say

yes or no. But in one of them I find the following remarks :

‘*Arsenious Acid—White Oxide of Arsenic, or White Arsenic.*—This substance is of the highest importance, as being the frequent agent of criminal or accidental poisoning. . . . There are few substances so much to be feared, [it] being almost tasteless; it can be mixed with articles of food and swallowed without discovery, and there is no practically efficient antidote.’¹

This innocent-looking white powder, this potent (*ἀρσενικόν*) and fatal substance, of which your chemist must not sell you a dose without entering your name and address in a book; of which three grains’ weight will kill a man; was lying by one of the ordinary roads of the mine in open sheds, in heaps breast high. I was assured that no kind of harm ever comes of all this (save skin-eruptions to the workpeople, and these rarely), but it gave one a shiver to see those white mounds.

No other mine is so prosperous as the Great Consols; still, as I said, activity continues here and there in other spots of the mining regions, and in approaching St. Ives you pass through a scene of busy ugliness. But there are Cornish Towns on which neither the well-doing or ill-doing of mines has left any mark visible to a stranger.

Truro is comfortably set down among wooded hills, with a large agricultural market, and a little steamer running up and down, from one park-bordered reach to another, between its dull rickety little wharf and the magnificent ocean-harbour of Falmouth.

The Green-Bank Hotel at Falmouth I recall with pleasure, its large window looking upon the salt-water and hills and a countless multitude of all kinds of ‘craft,’ its good table, its plump and pleasant Cornish lasses who wait. On the

¹ *Chemistry of the Inorganic Bodies*, John Scoffern. London, 1856.

east side of the harbour (Pendennis Castle on the point) stretches the long, narrow, crooked old street of Falmouth, modern terraces on the hill behind it; across the water are hills and woods, and the fishing village of Flushing, reached by ferry, and behind those hills is expanded another and wider arm of the many-branching haven, of which it is boasted that the whole British Navy could lie safely there, and yet no one ship see as much as the maintopmast of another! I can commend to my brethren of the Walker family a walk I took from Green-Bank Hotel aforesaid. First along the harbour to Penryn (about three miles), dingy old borough town, running up a hill, wrapt round with orchards and gardens, its ancient church of St. Gluvias standing apart among tall old trees on the side of a steep shady ferny lane. Go up this lane, and turn to the right (at back of the church), then look for a stile on your left and strike into the path. It will lead you downwards through lovely grass fields and across one stone-griddle stile after another to the gay tide-margin and seaweed, and along by this, with clumps of trees and bowers of bramble and clematis, anon veiling or framing the sea prospect, anon leaving it fully spread. Winding round leftwise, you come out on a road, climb up-hill, descend again, and you have before you what might be a great solitary Highland or West of Ireland lough—Carrick Road.

Down hill leads you to a clump of tall trees, into a church-way path, among graves and under a yew (the little church, alas, 'restored,' but with some proofs of antiquity left) and out by the water's edge. Mylor, this place is called. The opposite hills are bare; on the hither side a steep rock crowned with wood rises from the shore. On all the dark gray expanse of landlocked sea there was but one solitary vessel to be seen, a frigate at anchor. The tide was coming in and fast devouring the narrow

margin of beach, but I would not give up the chance of getting round that way to Falmouth, so put my best foot foremost among the stones and brown sea-wrack, turning corner after corner and finding the margin ever narrower, and the high bank with its rough hedge a-top no more accessible than before. The need of retracing my steps, and perhaps getting a wetting in the process, became disagreeably possible, when lo! the bank suddenly offered a rugged ascent, and the hedge a gap, and in an instant I was on a rough field-path with the gurdy sea below. At this part of the roadstead lay stately ships, some of war, others of trade, and turning the corner I faced Pen-dennis Castle and the populous Harbour proper.

The path led on through wheat stubble and into a dark wood, full of devious and enticing ways, then out again at the fishing village of Flushing—a knot of narrow crooked lanes with some large quiet old houses that have seen better days, fishing nets drying, fishermen lounging, and the ferryboat waiting to cross. It was now raining heartily, no unusual incident in the West-country. Three girls sat under one umbrella in the boat; near them a man, decently dressed in blue, who seemed to enjoy or despise the downpour; the only notice he deigned was to take off his wideawake and empty away the water from its brim. ‘You should have brought your umbrella,’ I remarked. ‘I don’t like umbrellas,’ he said; ungallantly adding, ‘They’re well enough for females;’ and when we landed he gave himself a shake and walked off in the rain. On all this warm and moist coast, Flushing is said to have the warmest winter climate, and for one in need of the like and not overburdened with money, this village might prove an excellent resource. The combination of solitary woods and hills with the activity of a great port is peculiar and striking. And you have but to step on board a steamer beside your own door, and away to London, to

Dublin, to the ends of the earth if you have a mind. A safe sea-*port* is the royallest of gateways and the freest.

Rain, rain, rain, disheartened me from the long day's trip to Lizard Point; and I hied to Penzance by train, gliding through a mining district still active, across a drained marsh and out upon the sea-shore, with that long-looked-for pyramid of the 'guarded Mount,' and on its own promontory the pretty Town which on false pretences has claimed the special protection of St. John the Baptist. Though the Town bears for cognisance the famous Head on Charger, it has no more to do with John the Baptist than with John the Anabaptist; and indeed the translation of Penzance as 'Holy Head' is itself open to doubt.

Unprosperous times have made no mark on the busy and pleasant town, with its glorious bay in front, and the irregular heights and hollows behind it comfortably wrapt in trees. It was a surprise to find so much foliage; the first mile or two towards the Land's End, for instance, overarched with green shade, and at the other corner of the town a brook running gaily down through groves and leafy pastures. The market-gardens are famously productive. Outside this warm semicircle you come suddenly upon the bleak barren slope strewn with blocks of granite. The usual fences on roadside or elsewhere are dry stone-walls, but these are more beautiful than any hedgerow, their gray stones lichen-stained, interwoven and over-tufted with ferns, mosses, grasses, wild flowers, strawberry, briony, ivy, endless richness of natural embroidery.

The town has some crooked old streets going uphill from the well-walled harbour, and in the market-place a frock-coat statue of Sir Humphry of Penzance, with his 'Davy Lamp' beside him. Better worth while, methought (if such things be worth while), to have a statue in the street of one's own town, close by your birth-place and grammar-

school, than to find elbowroom in that monumental miscellany of the cold aisles of Westminster. From the older part of Penzance pleasant shady paths lead you to the shore, the sands, and the great bay; St. Michael's Mount rises tower-crowned on the left four miles distant, the coast stretching away misty behind it; on the right hand a hilly promontory against which nestle the fishing villages of Newlyn and Mousehole, quaint places of steep narrow alleys, fishing nets, and fishermen, and fishy smells, and sea-wind, and healthy women, young and old, and pretty children. At the back of this promontory is Lamorna Cove, a name of promise, and it still has the brook rushing through its glen to the rocky creek; but stone-quarries and a pier have almost ruined its charm.

One calm evening after dusk a line of fiery dots extended all across the bay, lights of hundreds of fishing boats waiting for dawn to catch pilchards. At Newlyn I saw a pilchard-curing place where a handsome black-bearded Frenchman was superintending the tinning of the fish *à la sardine*. In the fresh-cooked pilchard (not as good as herring) the sardine flavour is perceptible.

There is no space left to speak of the Logan Rock and the Land's End, or of Zennor parish, all rocks and gorse, with a postal delivery but twice a week; wild, yet not barbarous, for did I not hear an organ played sweetly in a small cottage by the wife of a miner, and the miner had made that organ every bit with his own hands and added an improved pedal action? and within sight of this was there not a mouldy-looking old house filled inside with good books, ancient and modern, collected by an old gentleman who has never been in London but once in his life?

A rugged, not unfriendly region, full of huge granite boulders, often windy, never cold, washed with frequent showers, a dark blue or dark gray sea waving and dashing

round its rocky promontories and pinnacles; and at the southern fringe of this, warm Penzance upon its wide-armed bay,—such is the farthest corner of England, the last where the ancient British tongue was heard, and surely one of the most charming places for a summer visit or a winter retreat. May I have the luck to see it again, and again to enjoy the comforts and civilities of Mount's Bay Hotel.

RAMBLE THE FIFTEENTH.

EDINBURGH—STIRLING TO AYR.

THIS bright August morning, the first of the month, surely the long delayed summer is begun at last? London streets, as we drive along, seem to share our sense of holiday. Brompton, Piccadilly, Regent Street, and the New Road, clean and smokeless, enlivened, not crowded, with early passers-by, who are evidently neither rogues nor idlers, but each making steady way to his or her lawful business, have an unwonted cheerfulness of aspect. At the Great Northern terminus, swarming with travellers and their luggage, everybody is gay and good-humoured, and the full train rolls away merrily out of the skirts of the huge shapeless metropolis into sunshine and corn fields, towards the far-away towers of York Minster.

Some of the railway embankments, carefully cultivated as kitchen gardens, showed an abundance of cabbages, peas, lettuces, etc. It is strange that this practice should not be more general. The 'cute American farmer who set his farm on edge and took a crop off both sides would find many an eligible acre in the thousands of miles of railway banks throughout the kingdom, now mostly barren or growing weeds only.

Among the beautiful green slopes and woods of Muswell Hill we shot past a vulgar glass 'palace,' and past the little town of Barnet on its pleasant ridge to the left. The

broad rich country—with its woods and pastures, ripening corn, fragrant bean fields, wonderful glow of scarlet poppies, haymaking (so late this year), breadths of warm scented lavender, old red farmhouses, villages, church-towers, more corn, more woods and hedgerows—was all steeped in sunshine and summer glory; things we had almost forgotten in the stony streets, crowded rooms, and ungenial weather of the London season.

Between looking, reading, and chatting, hours have fled cheerily; and here is Grantham, with beautiful tall spire, recalling the queenly one of Salisbury; beyond it stretch the rich pastures, with low wooded hills to the east. Then comes and goes on our left the large Early-English church of Selby, with its square central tower and pinnaced gables; and soon after, on their hill, rise to view three great towers, well known from a thousand pictures,—York Minster.

One, two, three hotels near the station are full, for there is an agricultural show in the city; but I find harbour in the fourth, and see with delight from my bedroom window the grand old Cathedral athwart the smoke of many chimneys. It is a great point to see something from one's bedroom window; incidental glimpses often give most pleasure and leave most impression.

Out I sallied through the narrow old-fashioned streets and over a bridge. Is York a seaport? No: these are only barges, that come up the Ouse from Goole; but their masts and quaint green and red hulls make a pleasant show along the quay, and there are sailors there and sailors' taverns, and the river is a good breadth. Then wending upwards, and turning a corner, I am suddenly overshadowed by the Mighty Presence, and stand speechless before the great south porch. It does not equal, architecturally, the north porch of the noble church of Westminster, but this edifice on the whole is externally far more impressive and more delightful than that which stands at the end of Parliament

Street. Comparing interiors, York must yield the palm, save in the matter of stained glass. Her ancient windows, which all escaped the Puritans, glow with wondrous jewelry. The 'Five Sisters,' five lofty and equal lancets in the gable of the north transept, are delicately rich in their intertwining patterns and softly varied colours, as though made of vernal wild flowers. Close to this tender and harmonious triumph of art, so as to draw aside and dazzle your eyes as you look, are several windows newly filled with glass by Somebody & Co.—reds, blues, and yellows, like a cheap coloured engraving. Memorial windows, doubtless. Bless all concerned!—the donors, the manufacturers, the Dean, who gave permission.

I heard afternoon service, the singing boys, the fine organ (but wished it were anywhere else than blocking up the vista); then went round with the old verger, thin, civil, shrewd, and saw tombs and sculptures, and the carved ivory horn of Ulphus, friend of Canute, itself seemingly of Oriental workmanship and old beyond reckoning, and peeped into the dark-pillared vaults of the crypt, and turned into the lovely octagon Chapter-house, with six windows of noble old glass, and one of paltry new, given by a tradesman of the city, this last, facing the door, being the most conspicuous of any. The policy of not looking a gift horse in the mouth may easily be carried too far. It is only beggars who must not be choosers, and the guardians of such a place as York Minster ought to be particular.

Among old houses, with stone gateways, and armorial sculptures, leading to courtyards where clothes-lines with their burdens stretch across; into lanes, narrowing overhead, with projecting storeys supported on carved oak beams; up steps to an ancient hall, at one end of which a girls' school was busy at arithmetic and needlework, and along a passage to another ancient hall under the same roof, hung with portraits of city worthies, dead for centuries

some of them, and down a stone stair to a little mouldy chapel, half underground; through narrow streets again, with small churches in nooks; under a frowning city gate, and battlemented wall, lost again into the houses on either hand; round a strong castle (now the county jail) with massive outer wall of modern masonry; across an open green, with trees and paths leading to the river, to the wharf, to the bridge, and up steps to bustling Micklegate again: thus I rambled during my first two hours in York.

I had expected rough manners, at the least a certain broad independence and *brusquerie*, in the Yorkers: I found a broad accent, but everybody who spoke it was extraordinarily civil, as well as ready-witted, and in the streets both children and grown folk took a real interest in answering questions, and directing the stranger. I took a fancy at sight to the City of the White Rose and its inhabitants.

Nor was my first impression afterwards spoilt, as sometimes happens. After dinner I turned to the right hand, passed a delightful old church among the trees that overhung Micklegate, and through Micklegate Bar along a broad cheerful suburban road till I reached the racecourse, a wide-spread green pasture, with open paths through it. Its name is no doubt highly appropriate at racing time—Knavesmire—but to-night it looked as innocent as possible. An old woman from a cottage near the gate, carrying a white-haired half-sleepy little grandson in her arms, answered my questions in a most ready and kindly way. They had come out to look for a toy the child had lost in the grass, and without which he was not quite willing to go to bed. The sun went down over the broad green field and quiet clumps of trees, and turning back I soon saw the black gateway that still dominates the entrance to the city, and over it, huge and misty, those Three Towers, two equal and richly pinnaced, and one larger than they, square, mighty, and massive. By the Gate are steps to the old

Wall, which, as you walk along it, shows you gardens, hills and fields, roofs, chimneys, gables, and the all-commanding Minster, and overhangs at one corner the iron web of a great railway station.

The full moon was up when I again crossed the river by another bridge, a handsome modern one, leading direct to the Minster's west front. No gate or fence forbade to ascend the broad low steps of the western front, to stand in the shadow of its pillared portals, to let one's eyes, awe-stricken, travel up the great carven towers, like mighty ladders into the night-sky. To wander, a new comer, through a famous old city by full moonlight,

Halving church-towers and endless streets with shade ;

to find in some ancient narrow thoroughfare (but neat and prosperous in its old age) a narrower court, with trim old-fashioned tavern-parlour to sup in, among portraits of dogs and horses ; then across the river again, by another bridge, its barges asleep in the moonlight, and so to clean sheets and sound slumber, was pleasure enough for one evening.

Next morning, at eight, found me atop the great square central tower of the Minster, looking on the long ridges of gray roof, the rich twin western towers, the many pinnacles far below, and, still farther down, the flagstones and the human mites creeping by. There is the old red-brick mansion (the Blind Asylum) into whose courtyard I wandered delightedly by the moon ; behind it peep through foliage the beautiful arches of St. Mary's ruins, and the river runs at foot. Close under me is the Deanery, a modern Elizabethan house with beautiful little old chapel behind and large gardens bounded by the city wall. Black Monk-Bar rises among the crowded roofs, and round about spreads the great rich plain, corn, pasture, and woods, in a haze that promises heat.

York was a chief station of the Kelts and of the Romans,

perhaps the chiefest in all Britain. Saxon Winchester, London, and other Southern cities grew in power, but York remained the capital of the North, and at the Norman Conquest had, as some reckon, twenty thousand inhabitants, a great population in those days. Spite of collieries and railways it has only double as many now, luckily, say I. The modern increase of towns is for the most part ugly surplusage; they are, in an artistic sense, highly uncomfortable, sprawl about so that you cannot tell where they begin or end, and envelope and confuse what is really characteristic in them with tiresome and unmeaning rows of brick, or stucco, or stone. I don't deny that ventilation, drainage, etc., are good things, or assert that 'modern improvements' are contemptible because modern, if they are really improvements. But are our average modern streets always quite perfect in those comforts and sanitary arrangements on which we pride ourselves so much, and which certainly ought to be very complete if they are to compensate for the loss of the naïve honesty and fancy of good old mason-work and wood-work, the liberality of large gardens, and the natural cheer of the open country coming up to our gates; not to speak of the feelings of neighbourliness and citizenship which are as much out of fashion, I fear, in a modern mushroom town as grace and picturesqueness? I half-expected to find the true York smothered up in a sham modern York, but it remains fairly compact, and has left a fitly harmonious impression. Moreover prepared (as I said) for a degree of rudeness, or at least roughness of manners, I found nothing but marked civility, and even anxiety to please, in old and young. The broad Northern accent conveyed no rude answer to any enquiry.

I noticed here, as I always do in coming out of London into a moderate sized country town, how much more content, and even happiness, is expressed in the majority of the faces. In the thoroughly rural parts there is apt to be a

dulness and stolidity, but in a town large enough to share in the daily stir of the world, and not too large to repulse and drive afar off the amenities of nature, so soothing, so medicinal, even to those who are not conscious of their effect, there is a good chance of wholesome life, and so say the faces.

And now we are again speeding northwards, distant blue hills to right and left, a sense of largeness in the landscape. This is Darlington, full of tall smoky chimneys, and soon after leaving it we cross the Stockton and Darlington Railway, canny George Stephenson's work, the first bit of road in the world on which passengers ever travelled by steam; and that is only six-and-forty years ago. A fellow-passenger tells me that this line is still one of the most profitable in England, countless tons of coals and iron rolling over it continually.

The poor colliery-fireman's son, who learnt to read when he was eighteen, what a change it has been his part to bring about—mainly his—over the face of England during the last forty years (saying nothing of America or elsewhere)! This plethora of town-population, this rapid circulation of things, people, ideas, this hastening of the national pulse, this general feverish restlessness of modern life; steady, solid, shrewd George Stephenson has, innocently enough, had much hand in bringing it all about for better, for worse.

Meanwhile the magic car sweeps us ever northwards, through Durhamshire now, where the landscapes are barer, and the villages have a ruder and less English appearance. Ironworks flame on every side, among their black mounds of slag. Westwards, where the landscape opens, we see, on the edge of a wooded valley, two miles away, a group of three dark towers, which, diminished though they are by distance, have a solemn and massive impressiveness—Durham Cathedral. The little city lies perdue, showing

merely its haze of blue smoke. How small, silent and lonely looks this famous old nucleus of humanity amid the wide landscape, under the wider sky! All cities, even the great capitals, what specks of dust they are on the earth's broad curve!

Now every mile grows blacker and smokier, ironworks and collieries crowding on every side, till we glide on a lofty viaduct over 'coaly Tyne,' its wharves and ships, chimneys and furnaces, by an ancient black tower (the original 'Newcastle,' built by William the Conqueror's son, Robert), and into a great railway station, one of the stateliest and solidest structures of its kind. There was just time to run out and see the modern Grey Street, and some of its fellows, all built of clean stone, and the old tower of St. Nicholas, with its beautiful crown-like lantern, before we resumed our swift progress, emerging from smother and blackness into a wide green plain and pure atmosphere; passing a little red and blue Town in a hollow, with the Border Castle still keeping watch over it as of old from among its trees—Morpeth; through a broad green country of low trees and irregular hedgerows, intersected with glens, often the home of a brook (or 'beck,' as they say here), the sea-line on our right, Warkworth Castle, the little port of Alnmouth, Holy Island, low and sandy, rising into a castle-crowned rock at its southern extremity; and gliding over the Tweed into that oddly seated town of Berwick, which has the honour of a special mention in Acts of Parliament. It stands, within and beyond its ramparts and gates, on a promontory between river (here about three hundred yards wide) and sea. On the upper side of its fine old bridge, tidal Tweed, father of many salmon, has sloping banks of underwood; on the other curving round the town, flowing by the pier and its ships, and out to the sands and waves. The station here, and refreshment place, were slovenly to a degree that surprised us, coming from the South, but with

which we grew familiar, though not contented, in the course of our subsequent experiences.

This ambiguous town was no sooner past than the landscape suddenly took a strongly characteristic Scottish appearance. Some hints of an approaching change had already been given, but here a new condition of things directly and emphatically asserts itself, as much so as if Berwick were a gateway with England written up on one side and Scotland on the other. Instead of hedges, there are low, rough stone walls; on the treeless grassy slopes smile many tufts of harebells (Scotland's 'bluebells'); now and again we shoot over a little rough glen, shaded with ash and rowan, its brook ('burn' we must call it) dashing down among rocks to find the sea. Sheepwalks, fern and heather—all is Scottish. The sea on our right shows from time to time. Now we speed into a more woody region, with a great modern castle among the trees, see the pyramid of the Bass Rock afar off, pass the Dunbar of Cromwell, the Preston-Pans (salt-pans) of Johnnie Cope, Musselburgh, Portobello—all the towns looking rough and unkempt after England, and the stations rude and neglected. Gliding now among walls and houses of gray stone, and close by a venerable building of noble aspect, with the ruin of a rich Gothic chapel attached to it (which is no other than famous Holyrood), we plunge into a pit of infernal blackness and smother with a shriek like ten thousand demons, and go roaring and shrieking through the dark, to emerge in a huge semi-subterranean railway station, dubbed of 'Waverley,' the dirtiest, ugliest, and most uncomfortable that the art of man has yet contrived. As we try to secure a porter, and to keep out of the way of those already engaged, who shove against everybody remorselessly, and speak a strong harsh language with some rude likeness to English (such is really the first impression), we see on our left a huddle of ragged gray stone houses, extremely lofty, but with an aspect of

harsh poverty, and feel little prepossessed by these first impressions of Auld Reekie.

Several weary flights of stairs lead to the upper world, where Prince's Street helps to reassure us, though it is not a street at all, but a terrace of neat moderate-sized gray stone houses, mostly shops and hotels, facing a green valley whose farther slopes are topped with the long, upward slanting ridge of the Old Town (now mixed with many new edifices) culminating in the Castle on its precipice-edge. Near the middle of the thick-built ridge stands a dark church tower, sky seen through the beautiful open work of its crown of stone, airy at once and massive; and close behind the lower end of the broken ridge of tall gray houses rises suddenly a bold mountain. Here is the huge Gothic shrine of Sir Walter, his white statue seated under its four-arched canopy, whence climbs a too-heavy spire; but the whole is rich and effective. There are the two dumpy Greek Temples on 'the Mound.' The other way, Calton Hill shows its queer jumble of monuments. And here is our inn, in the pleasantest situation in all Edinburgh, the open and cheerful square of Scotland's patron-saint; Prince's Street on one hand, and a glimpse of the Firth of Forth and the Fifeshire Hills on the other.

It is possible to see nearly all that is broadly characteristic in Edinburgh's outward aspect in a quarter of an hour, the remarkable things are so accentuated by position and arrangement. I was about ten days in 'the gray metropolis of the North,' and became familiar with her features by sunlight, moonlight, and gaslight from many points of view, —and a very uncommon and striking city she is, at the present day and at all hours, affording a theatric *coup-d'œil* from various points, and full of picturesque glimpses and surprises. Yet, neither the first impression nor the final sum of my impressions was comfortable, in an æsthetic sense. Edinburgh has gradually become, and is more and more be-

coming, annoyingly heterogeneous in aspect. One is often reminded of a chimney-piece overloaded with a jumble of ornaments, or a room crowded with furniture of all tastes and styles together. From Prince's Street you can see at one view two squat Greek Temples, a huge florid Gothic monument to the great novelist, a large Renaissance Bank of Scotland, a Free Kirk Assembly Hall with two conspicuously ugly towers of bastard Perpendicular, the beautiful old crown of St. Giles's showing between them ; and, further up, the Castle, a huge heap of bastion and barrack, bestruck with little modern turrets. Here stands a statue of Allan Ramsay ; there, up a vista, one of George the Fourth. The street line is finished at one end by a dull, ungainly modern church tower with four pinnacles, and at the other by the Calton Hill with its beginning of an imitation of the Parthenon (twelve pillars and a bit of architrave)—its circular Greek cenotaph, its quadrangular Greek observatory, its Egyptian obelisk, its mock-mediæval castle (the jail), its Nelson Monument, like a lighthouse, its old observatory, like a windmill, and several other architectural curiosities,—the two last named being the most comfortable to look at, as honest and unaffected.

One of the newest specimens added to this miscellaneous city, is a bronze fountain (without water as yet, usually very scarce in our modern fountains) set up in the western part of Prince's Street Gardens, in the hollow. This fountain, rather the metal machinery for one, is large, florid and ugly, carrying atop a female figure, which seen from the front looks like a Fury, from the rear like Venus Kallipyge, but, as it holds a heavy cornucopia, is probably intended for the Goddess of Plenty.

But let's to the Old Town, and to the hall of its old Parliament House ; for there the British Parliament of Science has its headquarters this year, and we must get our ticket and hear the President's opening address this evening. The

old hall, now in the hands of the lawyers, is very stately, with a beautiful carved roof of dark-coloured oaken beams. It is also perfectly trim and tidy, and the great window is filled with painted glass from Munich, representing the first meeting of the Scottish Lords of Parliament in presence of James V., May 27, 1532—an elaborate picture in the most garish colours, with architectural background, in which are represented two other windows and buildings outside thereof, supposed to be seen through them, to the great admiration of many beholders. While I was contemplating this work of art, a gentleman whom I knew told me that being at Munich the other day he went over the famous stained-glass manufactory, and one of the principals said ‘You ought if possible to see the great window of the Parliament House at Edinburgh: *that* is decidedly our *chef-d’œuvre*.’ It is satisfactory to be able to lay one’s finger on an admittedly typical work in any class, the *ne plus ultra* of its kind. There is academic skill here of an uninteresting sort in the drawing and grouping of the figures (which I think are by Kaulbach), but as a work in stained glass I have not hitherto seen so pretentious an example of the worst school as this window. A bad public work of art (no matter who has paid for it) is a public injury, and ought to have its character made clearly known.

Sir William Thompson’s address was given in the Music Hall in George Street, a large building, but the crowds choked up its doorways and crammed it in every corner, and the attendant at the inner door exclaimed in a tone of despair as we showed him our tickets, ‘Ye maun jist push in; it’s a parfik confusion!’ The address, which was inaudible to many at the back, lasted nearly two hours; the President reading it (with sharp Ulster-Scottish accent) from a printed copy. To read in ordinary tones an essay full of abstruse details for two hours to a mixed assemblage of two thousand people is surely a mistake. There is no use, and worse than

none, in 'addressing' an audience *vivâ voce*, unless by voice, eye, presence, gesture, you can add personal impressiveness to your subject-matter. The art of reading aloud, which is a form of oratory, should be generally taught and exercised, and it ought to be held as absurd to stand up before a number of people to read aloud without some proficiency in the art, as to try fiddling or singing to them with no more qualification. A lecture like the present—a mere going over the words of a written essay, is a custom, a superstition, for which Sir William is not responsible; but his discourse (though full of interest) was also of a length unsuited to the average of human patience. Most people would have been content with an abridged form of it, brought within compass of an hour's delivery. Meanwhile we had the solace of staring at the eminent personages on the platform—of observing how perfectly like a sturdy gray-bearded English gentleman is the Emperor of Brazil; how vigorous and youthful the black-haired Professor Huxley looks after all his labours and controversies, and what a mighty dome is the cranium of our great Homologist of the Vertebrate Skeleton.

The President's address began with a sketch of the history and work of the British Association; he read part of a letter from David Brewster to Professor Phillips, dated Feb. 23, 1831: 'It is proposed to establish a British Association of men of science similar to that which has existed for eight years in Germany.' The principal objects of the society would be 'to make the cultivators of science acquainted with each other, to stimulate one another to new exertions, and to bring the objects of science more before the public eye, and to take measures for advancing its interests and accelerating its progress.' The first meeting was held that year at York; Lord Milton, President. The society at first sheltered itself under the lee of aristocratic *prestige*, but no longer finds it expedient to do so; and indeed the aristocratic element,

as recognised by the Heralds' College, is nowadays conspicuously and wholesomely absent from its meetings.

References to electric researches and phenomena naturally occupied a large place in Sir William's essay, who might be said to have 'plucked up drowned honour by the locks' from the bottom of the Atlantic, when the great Cable proved a success,—that is, so far as honour depends on title, which it by no means does in his case. Then he treated of *atoms*, and gave hope that the size, weight, and various movements of these least constituents of all matter will, ere long, be accurately known, and that even 'the superlatively grand question, what is the inner mechanism of the atom?' may at last be solved.

Next came *spectrum analysis*. Rays of light passed through a prism show various lines and bands, dark, bright, and of several colours, and these have been found to indicate the nature of the burning substances from which the rays issue—copper, zinc, sodium, etc. Astronomers have applied this fact to the sun and stars. 'A devoted corps of volunteers,' said the President, 'of all nations, whose motto might well be *ubique*, have directed their artillery to every region of the universe. . . . We had only solar and stellar chemistry; we now have solar and stellar physiology.'

O joy! I could not help exclaiming to myself, to live in this day of solar and stellar physiology. And when we do really understand the inner mechanism of an atom, how perfect will be our happiness!

Then Sir William went on to some interesting remarks on the solar system and the heat of the sun. The old 'nebular hypothesis' supposed a *fiery* nebulous matter to begin with, which condensed and stored itself into the great central fire-globe of our sun, and into myriad other suns. But, suggested Mayer, perhaps the sun is hot, or at all events kept hot, by the continual hammer-blows of meteors on that mighty anvil? Nay, says Helmholtz (in 1854), the mutual

gravitation between the parts of the nebulous matter was enough to nucleate the heat of a sun-centre, and still keeps up that heat by the *shrinking together* (if I understand rightly) of the parts of that mighty mass. It follows that the solar power is gradually diminishing, but there is no cause for immediate alarm, for 'we can conceive the sun even now to possess a sufficient store of energy to produce heat and light, almost as at present, for several million years of time future.' And who knows what may happen in the meanwhile?

The President had inclined to Mayer's theory, but has given it up, and apparently adopted that of Helmholtz. No chemical theory of the sun's fire is tenable. 'It must be concluded as most probable that the sun is at present merely an incandescent liquid mass cooling.'

That portentous and puzzling skyey visitor, a Comet—what is it? During the last few years the answer (hitherto so unguessable) has gradually come together, and is now clear and certain. *A Comet is a group of meteoric stones*; 'self-luminous in its nucleus on account of collisions among its constituents, while its tail is merely a portion of the less dense part of the train illuminated by sunlight, and visible or invisible to us according to circumstances, not only of density, degree of illumination, and nearness, but also of tactic arrangement, as of a flock of birds or the edge of a cloud of tobacco smoke!' Sir John Herschel declared himself (*Treatise on Astronomy*, 10th edit., p. 599) utterly at a loss to account for the tail of a comet sweeping round the sun 'in defiance of the laws of gravitation, nay, even of the received laws of motion.' But the 'tail' of a comet is no more what it appears to be than the 'horns' of the moon.

This was a very interesting statement, but enveloped in so much technical detail as hardly to tell upon the audience. It was only in the last ten minutes of his address that Sir

William succeeded in arousing general attention, when he approached the question, 'How did life begin upon this earth? Science,' he said, 'brings a vast mass of inductive evidence against the hypothesis of spontaneous generation. . . . I confess to being deeply impressed by the evidence put before us by Professor Huxley, and I am ready to adopt, as an article of scientific faith, true through all space and through all time, that life proceeds from life, and from nothing but life.'

I pause here to remark that this sentence does not appear to me quite satisfactory. It brings forward the authority of Professor Huxley, but arrives surely at a conclusion different from his.

And then Sir William proceeded as follows, raising his voice (for here was the 'trot for the avenue' as the Irish car-driver said), the whole audience at the same time—now somewhat thinned in numbers—making a perceptible movement of attention: 'How, then, did life originate on the earth? Tracing the physical history of the earth backwards, on strict dynamical principles, we are brought to a red-hot melted globe on which no life could exist. Hence when the earth was first fit for life, there was no living thing on it. . . . May not,' he went on to ask, 'the first organic germs have been carried to earth by *meteoric stones*? Science is bound, by the everlasting law of honour, to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it (*applause*). If a probable solution, consistent with the ordinary course of nature, can be found, we must not invoke an abnormal act of creative power (*puzzlement*).' 'It is often assumed that all, and it is certain that some, meteoric stones are fragments which had been broken off from greater masses and launched free into space.' . . . 'We must regard it as probable in the highest degree that there are countless seed-bearing meteoric stones moving about through space. Though the hypothesis might seem wild and visionary, I

(said Sir William) maintain that it is not unscientific (*ap-
plause, but of an undecided nature*).

‘From the earth stocked with such vegetation as it could receive meteorically, to the earth teeming with all the endless variety of plants and animals which now inhabit it, the step is prodigious; yet, according to the doctrine of Continuity, most ably laid before the Association by a predecessor in this chair (Mr. Grove), all creatures now living on earth have proceeded by orderly evolution from some such origin.’

After quoting Darwin on evolution, with approval of his opinion that ‘There is grandeur in this view of life,’ but rejecting the hypothesis of natural selection, Sir William concluded by declaring that ‘the doctrine of design’ has of late been too much lost sight of. ‘Overpoweringly strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie all round us; and if ever perplexities, whether metaphysical or scientific, turn us away from them for a time, they come back upon us with irresistible force, showing to us through nature the influence of a free will, and teaching us that all living beings depend on one ever-acting Creator and Ruler.’ Great applause followed these final words.

The President’s hypothesis of a meteoric origin for life upon our planet was much commented on in the newspapers, but was taken little notice of at the Association. Professor Huxley, in one of the sections, said it might be true, for aught he knew; but that at all events it was clear the President was a convert to the doctrine of Evolution, since only small and humble organisms could have come to earth in that manner.

Everyone saw at once that such an hypothesis threw no light upon the origin of life; it merely changed the venue, as the lawyers say, from our planet to some other. An impromptu version of the theory reached my ears, which

ran thus—in imitation of the well-known lines on Great Fleas and Little Fleas :

Young Worlds have old Worlds
With germs of life to seed 'em ;
Old Worlds had older Worlds—
And so *and infectum*.

Still, it is quite conceivable that the physical beginning of all the organic life which our earth possesses and has possessed was not on this planet, but that life-germs were transferred hither from another part of the material universe; and this, if proved, would make it all the more unlikely that we earth-people should 'discover' the origin of life. But, indeed, we shall never in any case make that discovery during our stay on this planet: nay, if we should hereafter inhabit every globe from Mercury to Neptune, and visit all the solar systems now sown as star-dust in the depth of our night-skies, this mystery would be as far from us as ever.

The meetings of the various sections of the Association at Edinburgh, excited but little public interest, except those in the Anthropological Department of Section D (Biology). The proper study of mankind, and especially woman-kind, is man; and crowds of both sexes—ladies, I think, the majority—thronged to hear of Man and the Ape, and cognate topics; especially interested when clerical and scientific dogmatists buckled on their armour and spurred against each other in the lists, with little or no result save the amusement of the assembly.

Two *soirées* were given, one in the University Library, the other in the Museum of Science and Art. The first was densely crowded, and, indeed, it is evident that the popular element at the British Association is becoming unmanageably prominent—the mere swarm of people who will pay a pound apiece for the amusement of being 'Associates' and seeing celebrities; and that the true social element which used to characterise the meetings is getting

swamped, not to mention embarrassments which occasionally beset the scientific proceedings themselves from the same cause. But what can be done? Might there not be slight preliminary examinations in the principles of science before issuing each ticket, which would tend to the propagation of scientific culture? And 'Honorary' Associates might be admitted at *two* pounds apiece—which would probably keep up the funds while it lessened the crush. At this *soirée* in the University Library I first became fully and feelingly aware of how thoroughly the Scotch deserve their reputation of being the most *pushing* people in the world. My experience began in the vestibule, where my coffee was upset by an immense red-whiskered gentleman, in evening dress, all regular and complete (which usually tends to imbue one with politeness—certainly makes others expect it), pushing straight to the table. 'Really, sir!' said I; and what do you suppose *he* said? Speaking without any heat or any supercilious coldness but in the merest matter-of-fact style, and in a strong Scotch accent, 'Oh! everyone must take care of himself.'

I report this trivial anecdote because the phrase might serve as a motto on the walls of this good city. In that evening's *soirée*, and in the streets and assembling-places of Edinburgh, day after day I received an amount of pushing, elbowing, jostling, bumping, treading on the toes, such as I never before experienced. The Scot does not do this in the least aggressively; he pushes you aside because he is making the best of his own way; he gives and accepts innumerable concussions with equanimity, neither making nor expecting apologies. He is habituated to this rough style, as the barefoot children in these streets run over broken stones without feeling them. One might go about London for a twelvemonth without so much physical collision with your fellow-creatures as you meet here in a day. You may walk, say from Hyde Park Corner to the Bank, and with ordinary

care need not as much as feel your elbow touched: nay, if you go along Tottenham Court Road on a Saturday night, it is wonderful with how little friction the countless human atoms slide past each other. Cockneys are not especially famous for fine feelings and exquisite manners; but besides their rule (unknown at Edinburgh) of keeping to the right hand in walking, they have acquired as a second nature the habit, in cases where contact is inevitable, of slightly yielding so as to reduce it to a minimum—a habit that much conduces to general convenience and comfort. This bumping habit, and the harsh voice-tones in the air, are apt to make a thin-skinned mortal shiver at first.

The machinery of Scotch manners certainly works with a great deal of friction; although one must be unlucky who cannot recall examples of a combination of cordiality, frankness, naïveté, intelligence, and humour, at once very Scotch and very lovable. There are lips on which the Scottish accent sounds musical as an Æolian harp. I love in a peasant's mouth *the Scottish dialect*—a racy, picturesque, melodious, and in many ways delightful old form of English, with associations and literature of its own. Also, I greatly relish in certain people the more than usually emphatic *intonation* which tells of the hardy North country. But there is a peculiar and too common Caledonian way of speaking English, or rather there are several common varieties, which are merely the harshest and ugliest of all provincial brogues; the more trying, inasmuch as the tormentor is invariably proud beyond description of his atrocious manner of speech.

The old Church of St. Giles, 'restored' out of all reckoning some forty years since, excepting the delicious Gothic crown of its steeple, still expresses externally, through all the unsightly modern garb, the nobility of its size and plan. Inside it is divided into three Presbyterian places of worship, and to the largest of these, the 'High

Kirk,' I went on Sunday to hear Mr. Caird, a preacher of fame, and eke a college professor at Glasgow.

A somewhat questionable fashion has sprung up of preaching special sermons *at* the British Association in every town which they honour with their presence.

Mr. Caird (who spoke somewhat huskily, but with much emphasis) was on the broad liberal tack. He quoted passages from Herbert Spencer, Comte, and other modern philosophers; not showing them up as monsters or deluded—O dear no!—or taking refuge behind his Bible or any 'cardinal doctrine' of faith, but expressing a profound respect for these writers, and bringing his facts and logic against their facts and logic. It was a clever exercise, and a very curious discourse to hear in the High Kirk of Edinburgh, but it was hard to suppose it could do anybody much good.

Some of the old-fashioned worshippers must have felt uncomfortable like the villager who, after a clever sermon on the Evidences of the Existence of the Deity, said he had never thought of doubting it before.

Unlucky was it for Edinburgh when some clever wight thought of dubbing her 'the Modern Athens,' and gave the hint for her queer swarm of temples and monuments. Yet, in spite of all, there are wonderful picturesque effects here, as when, for example, you see from Prince's Street—say from the east corner of St. David's Street—red evening sunlight kindling up the whole range of the Old Town, blazing reflected from countless windows, and making a beacon of the upper portion of the Scott Monument, the valley being all in shadow. Or when, best by moonshine, you ascend or descend the long and lofty High Street, as though threading a mountain pass; the magic light and shadow throwing a veil over the general squalor of these huge old masses of building, of which, however, another sense now and again gives disagreeable evidence. The street narrows

at a projecting house (where once used to live John Knox), passes old Canongate Jail with projecting dial, and at foot of the long steep we emerge into an opener area and face a picturesque square building, with pointed turrets, its front in deep shadow. Moonlight coming round the corner silvers the foliage of a tree there that trembles in the night-breeze, and the moon herself is just sinking beneath the bold outline of a mountain which rises on the sky close behind. This is Holyrood Palace, and that the window of Queen Mary's dressing-room. Often in loose gown with loose hair on her white shoulders did she look out by moonlight on the opening of the Canongate and the outline of Salisbury Crags.

By daylight I trod the stately old historic rooms, saw the winding secret staircase and little private supper-room. This last ought to be re-hung with tapestry, and be cleared of the miscellaneous articles which are shown in it museum-wise. Also, that bedstead, however curious in itself, is out of place in the audience-chamber. There are some good portraits in the living rooms; and in the picture-gallery a series of Scottish Kings which ought to be presented to some Scottish Mrs. Jarley. The roofless Abbey, of most beautiful Early-English work, is still used as a burial place, chiefly for Scottish nobles. In one corner stands the gloomy Royal Vault, like a water-tank. It opened for the body of James V., last of its royal corpses, and afterwards for Lord Darnley's. Seven paces distant, under that east window, stood Darnley and Mary to plight their wedded troth.

It is little more than one hundred years (1768) since this beautiful chapel became a ruin. An incompetent architect put on a heavy new roof, which fell in. Was the fool punished? The loss is so recent that it vexes one's mind; and the empty, roofless shell has a melancholy appearance as adjunct to the solid, well-kept palace. I am beginning,

I find, to have moods of sympathy—not only as regards this but older ruins—with the American view that they are ‘dreadfully out of repair,’ and to be sometimes as little content with a shattered building as with a broken statue, however beautifully the wounds of the former may be bound up with plasters of moss and bandages of ivy. In front of Holyrood House is a stone fountain of recent erection, with a crown-shaped finial, in plan like the crown over the gateway. You can compare the two at a glance, and see how clumsy the modern ornament is. Where is the *artistic instinct* gone to, which used to keep very ordinary people right in other days?

I visited most of the sights of Edinburgh. Of many points of vantage for a general view the Castle ramparts rank first. There stretch the regular streets and squares of the New Town, thick-sprinkled villas beyond extending to that arm of the sea which Victor Hugo finely calls *le Premier du Quatrième*, that is to say, ‘the First of the Fourth,’ but usually termed the Firth of Forth. You see Granton and its ferry steamers, smoky Leith with its two piers, the white lighthouse on Inchkeith Island, the hills of Fife across the water. Due eastward the Old Town huddles in upon you, backed by its suburban mountain, which is part of the town, and atones for everything. At the feet of the high Castle rock nestle on one side the green slopes and woods between the two towns, on the other the broad Grassmarket, the narrow West Port, and a swarm of frowsy streets and alleys. Beyond these Heriot’s Hospital rises stately, overlooking the southern suburbs round Bruntsfield Links and Morningside, a prospect bounded at some miles’ distance by the chain of the Pentland Hills. To eye and mind a varied panorama truly. On the Bomb Battery stands one of the oldest of the great and terrible Cannon family, *Mons Meg*, at Sir Walter Scott’s request restored to Scotland from the Tower of London. While I looked at *Meg*, a soldier, who was

playing with a two-year-old boy and tossing him in the air, seated the child in the vast iron throat and pushed him gently in a foot or two, while the mother stood by smiling.

Several companies of the 93rd and another Highland regiment were at drill on the Castle Esplanade. The associations connected with the dress, the Scottish music played by the bands, the bagpipers, the historic scenery around, and the monuments to the memory of fellow-soldiers fallen at Waterloo, in India, in the Crimea, impressed my mind, cool as it was on such matters, and allowed me to imagine how great must be the force of *esprit de corps* on a soldier. The dress which the Lowland Scotch used to think barbarous and outlandish, and English authority prohibited as a sign of lawlessness (Dr. Johnson, in his visit to the Highlands in 1773, found but faint traces of it left), has in the present century been revived by the fanciful pictures of a novelist, and utilised by the military authorities to excite that valuable *esprit* just alluded to. (Something similar, perhaps, might have been done in Ireland; but the Connaught Rangers and Enniskillen Dragoons have little beyond a name to associate them with the Green Island.) Still more oddly, this mountaineer's dress in its modern theatricalised form—coming into full blow at the absurd reception of George the Fourth in '22—now represents Scotland in the world of costume; so do men cling to a once-recognised symbol, whatever its origin or intrinsic significance. Scott himself, somewhere, justly objects to the head-dress, with its drooping and hearse-like black tuft, in place of the bonnet and single upright feather of the true Highlander. The soldiers on drill were mostly, I should guess, Lowland Scotch. Many of them were mere boys.

We were allowed to see through iron bars the old crown and sceptre and sword of state of the Kingdom of Scotland, with some other regal ornaments. These, after the Union,

were locked away, invisible for several generations. They were reported to be in a certain strong chest in the Castle, but many suspected that they had been carried off to London. In 1818, on February 4, commissioners opened the chest, one of them being 'Walter Scott, Esq., one of the Principal Clerks of Session.' Amid much excitement the lid was broken open, and the old symbols of Scottish monarchy rose from their hundred years' sleep. It is certain that no one there felt the occasion so intensely as Walter Scott. Some ladies were present, of whom Miss Sophia Scott, a girl of eighteen, was one. 'His daughter tells me (wrote Lockhart, her husband) that her father's conversation had worked her feelings up to such a pitch that when the lid was again removed she nearly fainted and drew back from the circle. As she was retiring she was startled by his voice exclaiming, in a tone of the deepest emotion, "something between anger and despair," as she expresses it, "By G—, no!"' One of the commissioners had made a movement as if to put the crown on the head of a young lady near him; but at Scott's exclamation laid it down, 'with an air of painful embarrassment.' Scott whispered, 'Pray forgive me,' and then drew his daughter from the room, and when the air had somewhat recovered her, walked with her across the Mound to Castle Street. A very characteristic anecdote. The creed of old-fashioned loyalty found in Scott one of its sincerest and most enthusiastic, as perhaps one of its last, devotees, and he was able to worship monarchy without misgiving even in the person of George the Fourth.

Scott could have worshipped any king; but it is not to be forgotten that his 'fat friend' had treated him with much personal attention. Moreover, it is surely absurd to refuse the evidence that since the Second Charles we have had no royal personages in England who could be such pleasant company when he chose as fat George. Thackeray's 'waistcoats, and under them more waistcoats, and under them—

nothing,' is palpably unfair. Byron, who was no worshipper of princes, wrote to Scott in 1812 describing how the Prince Regent, whom he met at a ball, had praised Scott's poetry—'with a tone and taste which gave me a very high idea of his abilities and accomplishments, which I had hitherto considered as confined to manners, certainly superior to those of any living gentleman;'¹ and also describes him in *Don Juan* (xii. 84) as

(Whate'er he may be now),
A Prince, the prince of princes at the time,
. . . without alloy of fop or beau,
A finished gentleman from top to toe.

Byron would hardly have gone out of his way to write so at that date unless he had been a good deal impressed. Wilson Croker says, 'the Prince and Scott were the two most brilliant story-tellers, in their several ways, that I have ever happened to meet.'² Nero has been rehabilitated by a German historian, Richard the Third by an English lady, Judas himself by somebody. Who will try and whitewash our Fat Friend a little?

The Scott Centenary Festival (for he was born in 1771) being at hand, within the rooms of the Scottish Academy of Painting were gathered a large number of memorials of the Author of *Marmion* and of *Waverley* for public inspection. Scores of various presentments of the shrewd homely face were there, one of the most interesting being a miniature on ivory done at Bath, whither the little white-headed boy had been taken in his fourth year, by Aunt Janet, for the lameness in his right leg, brought on by teething fever at eighteen months old. At four and at fifty it was wonderfully the same head.

Under glass, with many other letters, lay open and legible that one from Mrs. Cockburn: 'I supped last night

¹ Lockhart's Scott (1844), p. 221.

² *Ibid.*, p. 313.

in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw'—going on to describe little Walter (about six years old) reading a description of a shipwreck and his remarks. When the boy was about twelve, James Ballantyne, for a time his schoolfellow at Kelso, found him 'devoted to antiquarian lore, and certainly the best story-teller I had ever heard;' adding, 'I cannot recall any other instance in which the man and the boy continued to resemble each other so much and so long.'

Scott himself says, 'It is always interesting to trace in the child the germs of the great man and his action on the world.' There is no difficulty about this in Scott's case: his life and work, in their best phases, resulted from the easy and healthy development of his natural gifts. He at times was disposed to lament 'the irregularity of his education,' and says, with his usual modesty, 'It is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities of study which I neglected in my youth: through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance, and I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a solid foundation of learning and science.' There are few superior men who cannot find subject for regret in a retrospect of their education, but the feeling, while partly just, is apt also to have a mixture of delusion. To those good things which we have missed we usually assign an excessive value, and do not consider that had we gained them, we must have lost, in exchange, some—and we cannot say how much—of those which have actually fallen to our lot. Scott had no turn for the natural sciences, none for the arts of painting or music, hardly the least relish for ancient classic literature, a positive distaste for all philosophic discussion, whether moral,

¹ *Ibid.* p. 32.

political, or æsthetic. He revelled in romantic stories, poems, ballads, the drama, and *belles lettres* in general; and along with this his mind had a special sort of antiquarianism, mainly mediæval and Scottish, coloured by sentiment and fancy, and applying itself to personal and local objects. He did not stickle for rigid accuracy, and readily accepted any excuse for conjuring up a dream of the bygone, not too far removed. 'If there's no tradition for this glen,' he once said to a companion, 'we'll invent one,' and certainly the merest hint would have sufficed him. His memory was a huge storehouse or museum; but no careful scrutiny into the genuineness or value of the various articles had been made by the collector. If ever man was born to tell stories, Scott was. The question is, did he do, as the French say, his possible, in that line?

Scott and Shakespeare are not seldom spoken of together, and it is sometimes remarked 'Scott wrote mainly for money—so did Shakespeare; and look what fine work each produced under those conditions.' Putting aside many other reflections, let us confine ourselves to this: we have no reason to think that we could have got better work out of Shakespeare than we have, except by his living longer, but we have several reasons for thinking that we might have had better work from Scott than that which he has left behind, admirable as this is in many ways. Shakespeare got money by writing plays, or rather in the main by skilful and business-like handling of theatrical property; but there is no evidence whatever of his having *written for money* in the same sense that Scott wrote for money. Proofs of fluency in the great dramatist's work are abundant—but there is no sign of hurry, or of what painters call 'pot-boiling;' everything (in his *own* plays,—we do not include those which he dressed up) is well considered, definite, complete, and, while done with the ease of sure mastery, is as good as he could make it. Scott's experimental novel,

Waverley, remains his best. The efforts and signs of book-making soon began. 'I have often,' reports Lockhart, 'heard Scott say that his second novel was the work of six weeks at a Christmas. . . . I am sorry to have to add that the severity of labour, like the repetition of it which had such deplorable effects at a later period of his life, was the result of his anxiety to acquit himself of obligations arising out of his connection with the commercial speculations of the Ballantynes.'¹

In this Scott Loan Collection hang portraits of pompous James Ballantyne, the printer; flighty John, his brother, whom Scott so unluckily set up as publisher; and Archibald Constable, 'the Shah,' whose failure for £250,000 dragged down with it the lofty edifice of good fortune of the famous author, who had unwisely become his partner, and magnanimously took the whole responsibility of this enormous debt on himself. I bring no accusation against these men; they did after their kind: but when I saw their portraits in this collection of Scott Relics, in all the glory of oil painting and richly gilded frames, I thought to myself that considering the disastrous effects the originals had had upon poor Sir Walter's life, the pictures, if shown here at all, ought to have been dressed in black crape. Scott's case is the first notable instance of the partnership of modern commercial ideas with literary genius.

The Scott Centenary Festival was held in Edinburgh on the 9th of August, not on his birthday the 15th, because the British Association meeting ended on the 8th, and, moreover, the grouse shooting began on the 12th. But this choice of a wrong day gave a hollowness to all the proceedings. Some American newspapers published (by telegraph) most flaming accounts of the Festival—flags, flowers, bells, illuminations, multitudes, notabilities, enthusiasm. To one who assisted at the actual thing it seemed rather a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

flat affair. The Festival (tickets, one pound each) was in the Corn Exchange, Grassmarket, a large area, decorated with blue and red calico and gaudy banners, in the style of an infant-school feast. Two thousand people were said to be present, and to most of them the speeches were inaudible. A band played, and some Scottish songs were sung by a professional vocalist. The representatives of English literature present were, as far as I know, Lord Houghton and Dean Stanley; of foreign, Dr. Beets, who has translated the *Waverley Novels* into Dutch; and Mr. Turguenief, the Russian novelist. The creature-comforts consisted of wine (claret and sherry) and fruit; and of the former a good share must have gone to the waiters, judging from the appearances in my part of the house towards the end of the proceedings. One waiter had seated himself in an open hamper full of wine glasses. Another, when I spoke to him, was unable to give any articulate answer, but smiled in a friendly way and patted me on the shoulder, to express his good-will. He for one seemed to enjoy the Festival. A few houses in Prince's Street had transparencies, staring at which the usual throng of idlers loitered past for an hour or two, and then Edinburgh went to sleep as usual; that is, as well as railway whistling allows.

This noise in Edinburgh is a serious nuisance; and indeed the formation of the Waverley Railway station in the heart of the best part of the city was a grand mistake. All the valley west of the Scott Monument is a pandemonium of smoke and stench, clatter and shriek. Rails, locomotives, sheds, a bare expanse of market beside them, overlooked by a range of prominent and ungainly buildings (between the North Bridge and Prince's Street), make the eye suffer along with the senses of smell and hearing; and all this before the windows of the best hotels. The railway whistle ceases not day or night, and echoes hideously along the valley. You enter Edinburgh, or depart from it, through a

very low and dark tunnel, shrieking infernally the while; and the impression on one's mind, both while you are staying in Edinburgh and afterwards, is that the whole city is but an adjunct to the ugliest, dirtiest, and noisiest railway station in Europe.

All this is unnecessary; nay, injurious even in a business view: for in Edinburgh the claims of Commerce are not paramount; she invites the visitor and sojourner mainly by her fame of picturesqueness and agreeability. This railway through the Prince's Gardens, and this odious Waverley Station, drive many away quickly who would otherwise have stayed longer, and keep many from making a second visit. The Caledonian Station, at the west end of Prince's Street, and the ground adjacent, would have afforded full room and convenience for a general station for Edinburgh, and the line which runs through the valley between the two towns ought to have been carried to the south of the Castle and Old Town, with a station near Holyrood—no tunnels needed. I dare say the pitiful rivalries and chicaneries of railway companies had something to do in the matter.

From the Waverley Station I started one hot, bright morning for Melrose, Abbotsford, and Dryburgh. It was an excursion in connection with the British Association; tickets applied for and appropriated in limited numbers several days before, with many solemn formalities. The management of the excursion (if any management there was) turned out to be mere chaos.

Passing Galashiels, now a place busied with the manufacture of the cloth called *Tweed*, we were set down at Melrose, and I was surprised to find the famous Abbey in the middle of a large common-place village, with a white-washed hotel almost touching its beautiful ruins. Thence, after an hour, the train carried us to St. Boswell's. Is there a Boswell too among the saints? Here all the omnibuses and other carriages provided for the excursion party—whose

number was supposed to be accurately known beforehand—were rapidly crowded up; those excluded being, I suppose, carried forward at some later period. For my own part, I took to that useful mode of conveyance, ‘Shanks’s Mare,’ and gladly, after the first vexation, found myself alone on a grass-bordered country road, on my way to the Tweed and Dryburgh, with the pastoral Eildon Hills in view.

I could think over the chief points in Scott’s career, which I had lately been reviving in my memory: his sturdy Border ancestors, of whom this was the region; his mildly strict father and mother, in good upper-middle class position; his lameness; visits to his grandfather at Smailholm, to his good Aunt Janet at Kelso, hearing Border ballads and stories, and already a sworn Jacobite; his irregular schooling, and large miscellaneous reading, especially in poetry and romance; his clerkship to his father, visits to the Highlands; advocateship; sheriffship; marriage; prosperous, happy life, enhanced by antiquarian and literary tastes up to the mature age of thirty-five. Then his sudden and, as it were, accidental appearance as a famous narrative poet, and some ten years later as a still more wonderful prose romancer; his Tweedside cottage expanding into a castle; his commercial partnerships and their sad results,—all the well-known life-story unrolled itself before my mind’s eye, with the fresh significance given by the presence of the actual scenery.

Goethe has a remark to this purport—that a man to make a great effect on the world must not only have faculty, but a suitable element to work in. Napoleon, he said, inherited the French Revolution, Burns the old songs and song-feeling of Scotland. Walter Scott, with antiquarian-romantic turn of mind and gift of picturesque narration, inherited the history and scenery of Scotland, full, both of them, of striking situations and contrasts,—old Edinburgh, the Border, the

Highlands; old feelings and manners, too, that were rapidly disappearing in an age of transition.

Here, seen first through a roadside copse, is famous Tweed river, curving brightly round its wooded hills. Though far from filling its winter channel, it is even now a dignified stream, and the ferryman has to pull strongly against its clear and rapid current. Under large ash trees and by flowery cottages I push up the bank, and along a bit of road to Dryburgh. Paying fourpence at the gate (all this toll is 'sent up to London'), and passing down a trim shady lane, I find myself among the beautiful fragments of the Abbey, Gothic arches, pillars, windows, cloisters, passages, a widely-scattered ruin, tufted with ivy and grasses, ferns and flowers, carpeted with greensward, shadowed with stately trees, surrounded by lawns and woods. In one corner grew a regiment of tall campanulæ with pale purple bells. On a fragment of hoary stonework hung a rich new bunch of honeysuckle-blooms, fragrant coral and amber. In an aisle which still retains its groined roof, behind heavy iron rails, are several ponderous modern tombs—those of 'Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford,' of his wife, of his eldest son. Here also lie the bones of Lockhart, his son-in-law and biographer. An old man was leaning close by, perhaps not hopeless of donations. He had been at Sir Walter's funeral—I think he said he was the sexton; but what with the swarm of excursionists, the policeman in attendance, the pompous look of the tombs with their jealous iron railing, I was out of tune, and went away quickly.

Recrossing the ferry, and leaving the crowd to fight for their omnibuses again, I walked back alone to Melrose, enjoying the summer day, hot though it was, the banks and hedgerows full of harebells and meadowsweet, and the rest now and again in shadow of a grove. Passing through the town for Abbotsford, by a suburb of neat little villas, I came

to a green, and a church of the regular, *stodgy* Presbyterian architecture of the last generation or two, and considered with amazement how Melrose Abbey and Dryburgh, and this building, could have proceeded out of the same general human mind. Then I struck a most delightful high path by the Tweed, showing, through a tangle of bushes and wild flowers, the broad silvery river below, anglers plying their craft, boys bathing, but after half-a-mile or so leading out again to the dusty road, and a huge new stuccoed Hydro-pathic Establishment, erected by a Company (limited). A couple of miles through rather bare and ugly fields, with rough hills on the left, and I arrive at a tall hedge and some good trees—the entrance to Abbotsford. The place is kept in very trim order—lawns and shrubberies, flower-garden and kitchen-garden. In niches in the wall of a large back green or courtyard are ranged various old bits of carved stone and fragments of statuary. In the house, well-mannered servants, one to each room, showed the visitors in parties of about ten at a time through the hall (hung with arms and curiosities, and lighted through garish coloured windows), the dining-room, library, and study. This last interested me most: the books; the heavy desk and easy chair; the little staircase and inner balcony by which the good man used to pass freely from and to his bedroom; the little closet where were kept his outdoor green coat, stout shoes, broad hat, and walking stick (I failed to notice these, if they were still there), with window through which he used to talk with Tom Purdie or the gardener (he called the little room ‘Speak a bit’)—all these seemed familiar. I managed to linger a moment or two alone, and felt almost as if I too had once on a time been guest of that most hospitable and amiable of men—had heard his hearty Scottish accents, seen the friendly twinkle of his eyes, and felt the grasp of his trusty right hand.

The north terrace shows the Tweed curving round a broad

meadow, skirted with the plantations in which Sir Walter took so great an interest and pride. But what had been the Laird's feelings could he have foreseen these two huge mansions, as big, if not bigger than Abbotsford itself, which now from the opposite bank stare defiantly into the Scott domain, the private houses of two rich manufacturers, in whose ears the very word 'Tweed' means a species of woollen cloth? Truly, vain in every sense was his adding 'field to field.'

A certain remark of Lockhart's¹ seems to me to involve serious misconception. He is praising Scott's 'capacity for practical dealing and rule among men,' and his immense business activity: 'Compared to him, all the rest of the *poet* species that I have chanced to observe nearly—with but one glorious exception [Goethe?]—have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives, and at best to fill the sum with dreams.' Now, surely, one of 'the *poet* species' is to be judged by his poetry? Unbusiness-like Burns, dawdling Campbell, lethargic Coleridge, have left us finer poetic works than any of Scott's. Moreover, after acknowledging a man's energy and industry, it remains to be enquired what the results are. Scott's series of business transactions brought him into a most lamentable position. The particular occasion which calls forth Lockhart's eulogium is—the visit of George IV. to Edinburgh, and all the histrionic Highlander doings connected with it, of which Scott was the mainspring!

Abbotsford has been called 'an architectural romance,' and such no doubt was the planner's intention; but the carrying out has not been successful. It is useless to criticise details—enough to say, that the architectural and decorative taste displayed in it are decidedly of no very high order. Had the author's word-romances been no better, this house would never have risen on Tweed-side.

¹ *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (royal 8vo. ed. 1844), p. 48.

Returning through the gardens on my way out, I happened to pass near a pump, at which a young lady of nineteen years or so was giving water in a cup to two bright little girls with long black hair, whom I had seen chasing hoops over the lawn. It was Sir Walter's great granddaughter. Lockhart, her grandfather, a tall showy man of dark complexion, regular, somewhat aquiline features, was every way unlike Scott; yet in this young lady Nature has gone back to the type of Sir Walter. The fact interested me much, and I trust there is no harm in noting it in print.

Besides the Castle and Holyrood, which are the alpha and omega of the Old Town, I visited all or most of the Edinburgh lions,—George Heriot's school for one (the word 'hospital' here and elsewhere has grown to be a misnomer), a building of which the smooth hard stone, finely cut and joined, gives a pleasure in itself, raised to satisfaction by the noble Renaissance style, at once rich and simple, and harmoniously united to a piece of Gothic in the chapel of the south front. Some of the boys were at play on the green lawn, which slopes down to the backs of the Grassmarket houses and many a frowsy alley, where, but for George Heriot's good thought, lang syne, they too might now be growing up in filth and ignorance. One hundred and eighty boys, orphans or indigent, and sons of 'freemen' in Edinburgh, are fed and clothed, taught and cared for, in this pious palace. The bedrooms, and other parts which I saw, looked the perfection of order and plain comfort, and the porter and housekeeper in appearance and manners were exemplary officials. Of the most promising boys a few, perhaps one or two in a year, pass up to college, and if their success continue, issue forth to the battle of life clad in due armour and weapons of University graduateship. There is very seldom an expulsion from the Hospital, says the intelligent old porter (whose Scottish accent, too, sounds

perfectly fit and pleasant)—‘I mind but ane lately, and that’s years syne. He was a vera clever lad, tee, but wild—wild.’

Thinking over the chances of this wild clever boy, whose nameless shadow has come flitting across the field of my brain, I pass from Heriot’s ground through a wicket in the wall, and find myself in Greyfriars Churchyard, an old and notable burial-place, once the garden of the monastery, now hemmed round with backs of houses. Wandering among grass and grave-stones, I came to the inscription for George Buchanan, ‘best Latin poet that modern Europe has produced.’ But sweeter (I thought), fresher, and more valuable than all modern Latin poems put together is that most delightful pastoral *The Gentle Shepherd*; and here, look, a slab, set in the side-wall of the new church bears the name of Allan Ramsay, and a quatrain signed Burns, which I cannot now recall, but it includes a line from Gray’s *Elegy*. An old man who was mowing the grass told me—with an interest in the matter (it was not pecuniary) which it would be hard to find in England—that Allan’s grave was not near the slab, but he could show me where it was—under that birch tree—his and his wife’s. ‘The vairse is Burns’s,’ he added. ‘All but one line,’ said I. ‘Ay ay, ye’re richt, that’s Gray.’ His manners were at once respectful and independent. He at once moved off and resumed his mowing. I have often thought that the old-fashioned respectable Scottish working people both of town and country are superior to the same class anywhere else. But I doubt the new generation has not improved on the old school.

Why has there never been a sexton-poet? I daresay Hamlet has given the true reason.

Against the oldest looking part of the churchyard wall (a fragment, is it not? of the ancient city wall) is an upright monument—‘From May 27th, 1661, that the Most Noble Marquis of Argyle was beheaded, to the 17th February, 1688,

that James Renwick suffered; were one way or other Murdered and Destroyed for the same Cause, about Eighteen Thousand, of whom were execute at *Edinburgh* about an hundred of Noblemen, Gentlemen, Ministers, and Others, noble martyrs for Jesus Christ. The most of them lie here.' But, surely, by far the greater number owed their fate to politics rather than religion. The old Greyfriars Church, built 1612, was burnt down in 1845, and the present building is in no way notable.

John Knox's house (provided for him about 1560 as minister of Edinburgh, and in which he lived some twelve years) I failed not to enter, mounting to the first floor by the old outside stair, which, like the countless other stairs of the High Street, swarmed with dirty barefooted children. The rooms, albeit restored and painted up, retain a veritably quaint aspect in their low ceilings, dark panels, and latticed windows. Here is the projecting little room which the Town Council built for the stern preacher, for a study, with an oak-chair in it vouched for as his. Hereabouts, in the larger chamber, he sat when the bullet intended for his head went through the brass candlestick. Outside, on the corner of the gable is carved a sun issuing from clouds, and bearing on his disk ΘΕΟΣ, DEUS, GOD, at which a bearded man points with his right hand, while he holds a book in his left. This perhaps has been added since Knox's time, but not so the inscription that runs along the wall:—

LVFE . GOD . ABUFE . AL . AND . YI . NYCHTBOUR .
AS . YI . SELF.

Under this is the window of a tobacconist's shop which occupies the ground-floor, with theatre and music-hall bills displayed among the pipes and 'birds-eye.' At the counter they serve you with a cigar, or with a ticket, price sixpence, to see John Knox's rooms.

The cemetery in which his body was laid is now Parliament Square, where you will find 'I.K. 1572' cut on a slab

in the pavement, just behind the horse's tail of a leaden equestrian statue (the horse in the act of performing a curious dancing step), with a long inscription on the pedestal, beginning '*Augustissimo, magnificentissimo, Carolo Secundo.*' That the August Charles's effigy should turn its back on John Knox's grave is appropriate enough.

At Geneva, one Sunday evening, I went to look at Calvin's grave, and found the citizens thronging into the doors of an Opera House hard by. In this old street in which Knox lived, preached, and has found a grave, folk do not go to theatres on Sunday; but on Saturday night, and not that night only, a drunken blasphemous, vicious, shameless multitude swarm in the main thoroughfare and up every stinking court and 'wynd,' and on every foul common-stair, and through every stifling hole and passage of the huge old frowsy gray houses, crammed with filth and disease, crawling with every kind of vermin, of which the human is only the largest. The public-houses close at eleven, but the people drink hard up to the hour, and then take out whiskey in bottles. The dissolute women in the streets are less audacious than in London, and not on such easy terms with the police: their being out without lawful business after ten is ground enough for an arrest. Still they are very numerous.

It is no easy matter to reform mankind.

The right way, it would seem, has not yet been discovered.

I saw the National Gallery of Scotland, a pleasant suite of rooms, containing several noble pictures of the Venetian school; a fine Gainsborough ('the Honourable Mrs. Graham'), a noteworthy 'Madame Pompadour' by Boucher, and other interesting portraits; but what I really learnt there was to appreciate the genius of 'Thomson of Duddingstone.' There are eight of his landscapes in the gallery, combining a highly cultivated artistic breadth and richness with a delicate and reverential regard for natural truth; 'Aberlady Bay' (No. 537)

being perhaps the best of all. John Thomson was born in the Manse of Dailly, Ayrshire, September 1, 1778, succeeded his father as minister there, in 1805 was presented to the parish of Duddingstone near Edinburgh, where he died October 20, 1840. He painted a large number of pictures. He is described as of very kindly disposition, with good scholarship, and also a fine taste for music.

The most popular pictures in the gallery seem unquestionably to be two, by Sir Noel Paton, purporting to represent scenes from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, very elaborate, clean and pretty in execution. They contain a crowd of naked figures, which, if they were not called 'fairies' and presented under the shield of Shakespeare's authority, would certainly be thought rather *queer* in their attitudes and goings on.

This reminds me of a walk I had in the Sculpture Gallery (over the Antiquarian Museum) on a day when it was open free to the public, and of the astonished looks of two lassies, evidently fresh from the country, as they marched down the central lane between two double rows of life-size casts from the antique—Ajaxes, Antinouses, and the rest of them. In the same place I heard a rough fellow say to his comrade, as they stood before a gigantic statue of Neptune, 'There wur nivir a mon as muckle as yon!' So practical in its views of art is the uncultivated mind.

I rambled to several interesting places near Edinburgh—to the wild sheep-walks that so strangely rise hard by—one might almost say *among*—the crowded city streets: to the grim gray seaport of Leith, and, crossing the Forth, watched that striking prospect of the mingled towers and mountains of the Metropolis of the North; to Roslyn Chapel (an hour's drive away through the stone-fenced barley-fields), fine-wrought gem of Gothic carving, looking down its grassy slope upon the glen where Eske brawls among rocks and high-piled trees, and the shadowy path leads to Hawthornden

(whose guest was Ben), standing solid on its verdurous precipice, while high around rise the valley-woods. I wandered out to Morningside, name of pleasant promise, a well-to-do suburb looking to the green slopes of the Pentlands. But, alas! when I got there I found myself in a network of high gray stone walls. 'Lover's Lane' has a cemetery wall on one side and a garden wall topt with broken glass on the other, each ten feet high. At the lower end comes one pretty peep of the green Pentlands across a meadowy vale, and they would have been visible all along the lower road but for the endless stone walls of 'Canaan Park,' 'Eden Hermitage,' 'Harmony House,' and other mansions. The 'Jordan' burn flows through the valley. 'These' (as Mr. Pecksniff said, in reference to his daughters) 'are not unholy names, I believe.' But they seemed true Calvinistic paradises, within their high and harsh walls of gray stone, length after length, and no glimpse even at the gates, which all kept tight their wooden lips.

I solaced myself by making a childish rhyme—

All tall wall, dreary weary way!
Harsh, grim, gray, dreary weary wall!

And it applies to most of the Edinburgh suburbs. Stone is so plentiful that people build eight-foot walls round their cabbage-gardens and turnip-fields. One gets sick of the harsh gray stone. Beyond Dean Bridge I came on the still quaint up-and-down red-roofed village of the millers, with the much-polluted 'Water of Leith' flowing through it; and wandered through Dean Cemetery on the hill above, where among the wilderness of tombs are those of Lord Jeffrey and Professor Wilson, once—but hardly now—names to conjure with.

How the important business of eating and drinking is carried on in Scotland as distinguished from other parts of the United Kingdom is a not uninteresting topic, but I have

no room to handle it. Let me merely recall a pleasant hour in an old tavern, yeleft 'John's,' in a huge old gray courtyard off the High Street, close to Parliament House, a house of long passages, low ceilings, heavy sashed windows, good meat, excellent toddy, once the lawyers' great house of call, and retaining a certain grave and learned aspect. I sat at the open window sipping my toddy. The bit of evening air above the tall housetops was for the time smokeless, and the shrill swifts darted to and fro in it. Far down in the courtyard was a noise of children at play, merry too, though doubtless dirty and barefooted. I was reminded of an old house of my childhood far away from Scotland, and of the Waverley Novels read aloud by my aunt to a delighted fire-side audience, nothing critical. What dreams I had then of the Canongate, and the Heart of Midlothian, and Holyrood, peopled with the great Romancer's men and women! And of true historic memories also, brimful is this wonderful old city around me.

Methinks, having had my toes trodden on, I may have spoken hard things. Where after all is there such another city? Do I not enjoy Scotch dialect, Scotch songs, Scotch music (even the bagpipes sometimes), Scotch humour, Scotch toddy?—and so I sallied forth in a kindly mood.

But near George the Fourth's Bridge a whiff entered my nostrils of no Arabian odour; suddenly a terrific yell rang through the steamfiend-haunted valley, and at the same time Calton Hill hove in sight with its crowd of architectural curiosities.

Fare ye weel, Auld Reekie, says I (speaking, I dare say, very indifferent Scotch)—I'm aff to the Hielands the morn's mornin', and gude be wi' ye!

RAMBLE THE SIXTEENTH.

STIRLING TO DUNOON.

[1871.]

OUT of the vile Waverley Station at Edinburgh we rush, yelling, into a low choking tunnel black as Erebus (there are no lamps), glide at last into fresher air, by the wooded hill of Corstorphine, and through the almost ripe corn-fields, reach in half-an-hour the ancient royal seat, Linlithgow. A little loch half encompasses the town and the palace (birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots), massive, quadrangular, roofless, in decayed majesty, on its rising ground, beside it the noble old church of St. Michael. Such shrines of Papal Christianity seem very odd lodgings for Presbyterianism; but of late years the Scotch have grown florid in their notions of church-building, and particularly the Free-Kirkers.

We run to Falkirk, and among the smoky ironworks whereby the southwest of Scotland, and in especial the shores of Clyde are so busy and populous. The smoke of the Scotch coal is thick and stifling, and is felt as a special nuisance in railway and steamer. Of the railway whistle I have already grumbled, and really it is worse, I think, in Scotland than anywhere, more frequent, persistent, brain-rending; the engine-drivers seem proud of it, like a child with its noisy toy. There again—ah! let me stop my ears. Three pigs-a-killing equal to one bagpipe, seven bagpipes one Scotch railway-whistle! In America, instead of this torturing

sharpness, a note of lower pitch and rounder tone is found to answer every purpose.

And now a truce to grumbling, and let us enjoy this bright afternoon and this picturesque old place, Stirling. I find it all I expected, and more.

The street, something like Edinburgh High Street on a small scale, climbs to the Castle Esplanade. There are old houses, narrow courts and passages, and often the stone stair from the causeway winds up and disappears like a snake through the low archway of a circular turret. Facing down the street stands an ancient and dusky house-front built of well-cut stone decorated with heraldic sculpture, the walls roofless, the doors and windows blocked up. Yet here is no ruin in the usual sense; 'Mar's wark,' as they call it, was built up thus far three centuries ago, and then the great Earl-Regent died suddenly, here at Stirling, while overlooking his work. So says tradition, and adds he was sacrilegiously using stones torn away from the neighbouring Abbey of Cambuskenneth. There is something peculiarly dismal in a building left unfinished for an indefinite time; it lacks all the pathos of a ruin that once harboured humanity, —is a monument of frustration and failure.

A right-hand turning brings you to 'Argyle's Lodging,' a stone house with courtyard and those conical-roofed turrets which Scotland copied, among other architectural features, from France. A sentry paces the flagstones, for the old mansion of the Lords of Stirling, the Lords of Argyle, is now a hospital for the Castle garrison. It has a neglected and slovenly look.

Stirling Castle, long a favourite residence of the kings of Scotland, now a common barrack, stands firm and stately on the edge of its precipitous rock overlooking a vast and varied prospect, the windings of the Forth, the Ochil hills, the battle-field of Bannockburn, and the wide vale westward, broken by wooded knolls and ending far off in the blue Highland peaks.

Close under the walls, and down the rock, goes the old road of *Ballangeigh*, 'Windy Pass,' from which King James V., when travelling *incog.*, used to style himself the Gudeman of Ballangeigh. See that rough furzy hill within a stone's throw of the battlement: many a man there, after one last look on the noble landscape, has had his eyes bandaged never to see daylight more. It is the famous 'Heading Hill.' The Duke of Albany and his two sons were beheaded there in 1420, within sight of their own castle of Doune; and many another noted head has fallen on that forgetful soil.

Overloaded, on the other hand, with trivial memorialism, is this other place just outside the castle gate—a pretty and picturesque bit of rocky ground, made a few years ago into a cemetery, and already bristling with necropolitan absurdities, of which the most remarkable are a white marble monument, including two figures (life-size I think), the whole *in a glass-case*; and a big pyramid of gray stone with glass-covered medallions let into it, and an inscription cut on each side in large letters: 'Rock of Ages'—'Throne of Right'—'Covenant Rest'—'Union Banner.' This conspicuousity (if such a word may be used) was put up, I hear, by a tradesman of the town. The odd thing is, not that any one man should be such an ass, but that the community should allow him to write himself up in such large type on the face of the landscape. Modern cemeteries, usually, are odious things, and the more so because they are generally placed in some notable and picturesque site. These obtrusive enclosures, with their foolish crowd of stonemason's ware, are usually the offspring of commercial speculation, trading, in this matter of graves as in other things, on the ostentation and bad taste of the general public; and the notable site is itself an advertisement. But it is true that in some cases a municipal or religious body, or an individual, selects a position of this sort, the prettiest hill or slope

near their town, for a cemetery, as being in their notion the fittest. In this I recognise a natural and praiseworthy desire to soften the idea of death and the dead by association with beautiful aspects of nature, but argue that they do not go the right way to work. A burial-ground ought to be—not dreary, lonesome, banished, but—quiet, retired, simple, shadowy, a place of pensive cheer, as the old-fashioned ‘God’s Acre’ so often used to be. By the plan now in vogue, you spoil your graveyard and spoil your hill.

Adjoining the cemetery is the fine old Gothic Greyfriars’ Church, now divided into two Presbyterian places of worship. One congregation, differing in taste, or pocket, or liberality (though not in doctrine) from the others, has scraped, painted, and restored its half of the old edifice, while the second moiety retains its crust of centuries.

Cowan’s Hospital, with quaintly terraced Dutch garden, was founded by a Stirling tradesman for decayed ‘Brethren of the Guild;’ but though the building stands firm, and the founder’s statue on its front, his intentions, like those of so many charitable bequeathers, have not been able to resist the slow inroads of time. Some good, one hopes, is done with the money, but no old men now sun themselves among the clipt yew-trees, and on the broad stone steps.

Clothing the west side of the ridge on which Stirling is built, ending in the castle rock, stands a bank of noble trees, with devious footpaths underneath their boughs, by which—getting here and there a glimpse of old wall and gate on the upper side, part of the old fortifications—you can reach the lower end of the town. It is worth while to emerge from this wood to the plain for a view of Castle and Palace, lifted proudly above the billowy verdure on their bold precipice of traprock.

Edward I. took this fortress (1304) after a three months’ siege. The English held it ten years, but—the great Edward now dead, his weak son on the throne, and Earl

Robert Bruce, claimant of the crown of Scotland, having regained the upper hand—the English garrison of Stirling found itself hard pressed. The Governor made pact with the Scotch that he would surrender if not relieved before Midsummer-day, 1314. This roused England; King Edward II. summoned his great vassals, and, with huge army (100,000 men or nearly) and endless train of baggage, rolled over the Border to Edinburgh, and on towards Stirling, an irresistible wave of war, to all appearance. A mile or so south of Stirling, Bruce and his 40,000 men (mostly commoners) awaited the assault of this mighty multitude. You see (as we stand on the castle rampart, looking south-westerly) those fields, corn and grass, rising unevenly towards the horizon—can you distinguish a tall pole or mast among the hedges? There, says tradition, King Robert's lion-standard was set in its 'bore-stone,' which still rests there. A rivulet, with the homely name of Bannock, flowed in a shallow valley on his right (as still it runs, thrice famous since that day); his left wing was at the village of St. Ninian's (where that steeple is), round which he had dug many pitfalls for hostile cavalry.

On Sunday, the 23rd of June, the armies were face to face, and skirmished deliberately after the manner of those days of personal prowess, Bruce himself killing Sir Henry Bohun in single combat. Next day the great battle began: the Scotch in three or four lines one behind the other, the English driving against the narrow position and getting no advantage out of the odds of two-and-half to one. It is likely that half of Edward's men had no chance to strike a blow. There was no manœuvring on the English side: arrows, spears, then hand to hand with sword and dagger: single combats by the myriad—desperate, bloody, and fatal, all across the field, as division after division of Bruce's men closed up and plunged into the *mêlée*. At last Bruce's small body of cavalry managed to get in upon a main body

of English archers, and threw them into confusion. Then came the crisis of the day. Behind a ridge at the back of the Scotch position (there it is, ever since called 'The Gillies' Hill') was a crowd of servants, horse-boys, and camp-followers: these suddenly, armed and unarmed, and with such makeshift banners as they could find, swarm over the ridge, with wild Highland shouts and gesticulations. 'A fresh army coming down upon us!' cry the English soldiers, and, having no dependence in their foolish leader (thus wanting the true mainstay of any army), waver, break, fly, and are slaughtered mercilessly, till Bannockburn is choked with dead men, and runs bloody to the Forth. There the Scots took their revenge for Falkirk and Wallace. King Edward galloped away with a small party, finding shelter at last in Dunbar Castle, sixty miles distant from the field where 1,000 of his esquires, knights, and nobles, and 30,000 of his soldiers lay stark and bloody.

So Stirling Castle and the crown of Scotland were Robert Bruce's, by valour and popular choice, added to his royal lineage. In mere hereditary claim, his grand-uncle, John Baliol, and Baliol's son, stood before him, being son and grandson of the eldest daughter of Prince David, brother of William the Lion; while Robert Bruce was grandson of the *second* daughter.

The hereditary office of High Steward—*Scotticè* Stewart—which had belonged to one family for over two centuries, and conferred a surname on them, at this time rested in the hands of Walter Stewart. Walter fought well at Bannockburn; afterwards married King Robert's daughter Marjorie; and their son Robert, other heirs failing, succeeded to the throne, in 1371, when fifty-six years old, first king of the Stewart family—an unlucky family, and a troublesome to these islands. Stirling, Holyrood, Forthringay, Whitehall, the Boyne, Culloden, Tower Hill, are these but topographic names? They seem to exude tear-drops and blood-drops.

From Stirling to Callander by rail; and there begin the mountains and coach-travelling. There was time to stroll along the village street—rows of plain houses bordering the high-road—and, turning righthand to the bridge, survey from its lofty arch the rapid and sparkling Teith, the ash-trees and pines, and the bulk of Ben Ledi heaved against the western sky. The enticing river, its cheerful current rippling by a knoll of firm greensward, drew me to the water's edge. A pure, bright running stream exhilarates like spiritual wine. Witch Melancholy and the whole host of Blue Devils dare not cross it—must not haunt it. It was long since I had enjoyed this delight. But stay—what is that worse than snake among the grass? a large iron pipe with open mouth to the river-edge. I suspect, enquire, am confirmed—it is the main sewage pipe of Callander—and, turning on my heel, I muttered, hastening to the coach, ‘O Dame Science! we might afford to wait a little for further information on the Origin of Everything, if, meanwhile, you could teach us how to deal with our sewage and smoke, and a few other commonplace difficulties.’

Away we drive, winding round Ben Ledi, by shady roads and heathery slopes. Loch Vennachar shows on our left hand, and in that meadow by the water ‘Fitzjames (says our driver) met Roderick Dhu,’ and all the tourist heads turn that way. Now we skirt Loch Achray, by woods and rocks, with a new and richly-shadowed mountain in front—Ben Venue. The landscape every instant becomes more picturesque and impressive; but meanwhile dusk has spread, and a heavy shower of rain comes on, in the midst of which we pull up at our goal, the Trossachs Hotel, and find it crammed full from roof to cellar. What to do? The host is very sorry—will send our luckless nine back free to Callander in the coach. Only three go back (so nauseous to human nature is forced retrogression); two ladies are ‘crowded in’ somehow; three young men will sleep on chairs in the

billiard-room. For my part, making rapid enquiries among some bystanders, I hear of a cottage a mile and a half distant, where there is a good chance of a bed. 'It's a poor place,' said my informant, 'but clean, ye ken. Artists and such-like stops there whiles.' The rain has ceased. I go, enter the open door of a low thatched cottage by the roadside, and, after a word or two, find myself familiarly seated in good old Mrs. MacFarlane's chimney-corner, by a great fire, over which hangs a large black pot. The good granny, with fresh-coloured shrewd face full of wrinkles, and intelligent gray eyes under the large borders of her cap, busies herself in quietly arranging the hearth; her son, a grave, handsome, dark man of thirty, sits opposite, while her granddaughter (whose parents live some miles distant, and who stays with her grandmother), a comely well-grown lass of fifteen, with flowing dark hair, short blue petticoat, and bare legs, after sweeping up the earthen floor, stands shyly in the back-ground. They speak Gaelic to each other, and my smattering of that language in its Irish form interests them much. Their manners were excellent, showing respectful ease and curiosity without impertinence. It was a pleasant conversation, all the pleasanter to me, as recalling many of a similar tone which I have enjoyed in cottages almost exactly like this in the north-west of Ireland. At Edinburgh I enjoyed some social intercourse with the *crème de la crème*, to-night with poor Highland cottagers. Their manners are equally high, delicate, simple, and unembarrassed. If there be a turn of the scale it is, I do think, in favour of the Gaelic peasants. Oh, my poor Irish friends, what an unlucky history has yours been!

The old lady was never as far as Edinburgh; she is now some years over seventy; her husband died about fifteen years ago, and her granddaughter Maggie stops with her and helps to mind the cow and two or three pigs and the fowls. Her unmarried son comes now and again to work the patch

of ground on the hill-slope behind; he is here now for the potato-digging. John MacDonald, a boatman on Loch Katrine, has a room in the cottage: he is out on the loch to-night rowing some passengers up to Stronaehlachar, and the cottagers are sitting up for him. After ten o'clock Maggie washed her feet in a corner, and saying good night, with a frank shyness which became her mightily, slid away to bed in some dusky recess. The old dame's sleeping-place was a box bed in the wall of the 'spence' or kitchen, where we sat with the smoky rafters overhead. The boatman's little room was to the left of the door, mine to the right. I had a box-bed; the only fault (a serious one) was deficiency of air, the ceiling being low and the window nailed up. I had to leave the door to the spence open, half smoke being better than no air. Mrs. Mac in the morning said she had often thought of getting the window made to open, and the first time 'a wright' came by she believed she would actually have it done, adding that it would be 'a grand improvement.'

Not far from the cottage, Glenfinlas, with its tributary brook, opens into the beauteous valley of lakes, where Lochs Katrine, Achray, and Vennacher are strung, as it were, on one mountain-stream. Lochs Doine, Voil, and Lubnaig belong to another some miles northward; and a little way above Callander the two water-threads intertwine and form the river Teith. I walked a short way up Glenfinlas, and came to a pretty waterfall foaming among rocks and trees. Having long been accustomed to saunter and meditate among such scenes, I find that a flying glimpse, such as this, gives me little pleasure. You can't swallow a Lord Mayor's feast all of a sudden, much less Dame Nature's.

I had a capital breakfast, better tea than I ever got in an English hotel, and two new-laid eggs boiled to perfection. While I ate them, the hen ran about the floor picking up the crumbs, which was only fair. Jam was not wanting;

and there was cheese, which in agreement with Mr. Boswell, 'I cannot help disliking at breakfast.' He adds, 'It is the custom over all the Highlands to have it.' (*Tour*, Sep. 9.) A hundred years ago, save two, the great Doctor and he made their famous peregrination; and the two *Tours* are still capital reading.

The adventure altogether was agreeable; and I waited for the coach in a pleasant humour, making a little sketch meanwhile of the exterior of the cottage, its rough stone wall with central door and two tiny windows, its roof of oak-peelings with weeds sprouting at the gable, its basket chimney whence the blue reek rose against a dark heathery hill-side, the straw-thatched byre of equal height contiguous to it on the left, and on the right several rough rocks with a run of clear water spouting out among them, where I had seen Maggie at her morning toilette. Also a rude stone bench on which sat MacDonald, the boatman, leaning against the wall to enjoy his early pipe.

Here comes the coach; away we roll; beautiful Benvenue heaves in sight; we creep up the narrow pass of the Trosachs,—gulfs of foliage, verdured cliffs towering to the blue sky; whirl down to the pier on Loch Ketturin, which we call 'Katrine,' step aboard the steamer, and begin to glide past many a wooded isle and rocky promontory, till in the wider water are mirrored those heathy mountain-ranges on either hand. 'That is Ellen's Isle,' we are told, and recall how when the *Lady of the Lake* appeared (in 1810), 'crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown;' every house and inn were crammed, and 'the posthorse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree.'¹

The well-known lines rose to memory :

And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,

¹ Scott's *Poetical Works*. Edin. 1847, p. 174, note.

One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd ;
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay.
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light ;
And mountains that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land, &c., &c.

Of which the *Critical Review* (an authority in its day) said, 'Perhaps the art of landscape-painting in poetry has never been displayed in higher perfection than in these stanzas.' *The Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, were the first books in verse which I read with eagerness (when nine or ten years old); it was for the sake of the stories; all kinds of stories were devoured. Even then, perhaps, pleasure from the swing of the metre and the bright descriptions was not lacking; but some years afterwards this delight predominated, and passages like the above called up imaginary scenes of splendour excelling any visible landscape. By-and-by, however, finding out things for myself, I had advanced another stage, and perceived that this was not poetry of an intimate value, and that even in its landscape-painting, admirable as that was, a certain kind of touch was missing. It is, in fact, more the analogue of Clarkson Stanfield's pictures than of Turner's or David Cox's. It has good solid qualities, but no magic. In the descriptions of riding, fighting, and all movement, Scott's wonderful vigour and spirit can whirl me away any day, as they used to do of yore; but the feeling always remains that even in these one is witnessing a fine melodramatic performance, rather than an ideal presentment of truth.

We land at Stronachlachar near the upper end of Loch Katrine, and mount the coaches that are to carry us over the five hilly miles to Loch Lomond. On our coach, among the ruck of tourists, sits a carelessly-drest man, swarthy, grizzled, hard as iron, with a strange profile—not cruel, yet

almost *tigrine* in its deepsunken eye, flattish nose, and strong jaw. This elderly Scoto-Irish gentleman has seen battles and sieges, and men swept to death by the thousand, has been Viceroy of a ninth part of the human race, and received the homage of great Oriental princes, and now here he is on our tourist-coach. [It was Lord Lawrence.]

Passing through the valley with its own little lonely loch, wooed by no tourist, we descend the steep hill to famous Loch Lomond, with many exclamations of delight at the magnificence of the first view of that deep water imbedded among lofty mountains and thick woods. At Inversnaid the inn was full, and I crossed in the steamer to Tarbert, with some qualms lest there should be no shelter there; and this was Saturday evening—no more steamers or coaches till Monday. From Tarbert Pier an undignified steeplechase of tourists ran to the door of the stately hotel, in which I joined, not without shame. But it was already apparent to me that one who travels from inn to inn of these regions in the tourist-season must either lay his plans some time in advance and telegraph to each intended stopping-place for the accommodation needed on a given day, or else submit to many vexations and even some humiliations. The Tarbert Hotel was full, but the host had engaged two small houses in the vicinity, and I went off thankfully to Valley Cottage, a mile on the pretty road to Loch Long, and slept there two nights very snugly, looking out each morning on the rushy field, the heathery slopes beyond, and the strange rocky crest of ‘the Cobbler’ mountain rising above them. The doors and windows stood open all day long. Our house-keeper was a tall Highland woman of grave, simple, and kindly manners. The passing to and from the hotel, where all meals were served, was sometimes troublesome; but the broad simple slopes, the pretty shaded road with low mossy walls, and thatched cottages beside a brook (in which I saw the cottagers, including two long-haired lasses and a stark-

naked child, washing themselves on Sunday morning), the strange rocky crest peering in from another region, the beautiful Loch Lomond with its namesake mountain at one end of the vale, and the saltwater fiord, Loch Long, at the other,—all this impressed itself upon me, by the frequent coming and going at various hours of day and night, and in various moods of mind, so that instead of two days I seem to have centred for at least a month at Valley Cottage. Like other pleasures, that derived from picturesque scenery is apt to evade a too eager pursuit. You may find the mountain or cataract, but you cannot command the mood for enjoying them. Often, in the fairest scenes, we may repeat Coleridge's line :

I see, not feel, that it is fair,

and unawares, in some happy hour or moment, 'reap the harvest of a quiet eye.'

Tarbert Hotel is splendidly situated. Below its green terraces shines the noble lake between wooded and solitary shores, the cone of Ben Lomond lifted into the sky right opposite. The English lakes are sweet and cheerful, even their fells and peaks softened with a sense of human neighbourhood; the Scotch lakes, amid this age of touring and villa-building, still keep their aspect of solemn, sometimes of savage loneliness.

All that golden Saturday afternoon, I lounged deliciously by the pebbled and rippling margin, or lay under a clump of alder bushes, reading *Rob Roy*. That mountain-land over the water, between Lomond and Katrine, was the MacGregor's country. I found the characters of the novel amusingly contrasted, but more artificial than I had recollected. Rashleigh and Helen MacGregor are true natives of the world of melodrama. Mr. Osbaldistone and his clerk, Sir Hildebrand and his sons, are sketched-in sufficiently for recognition, and Die Vernon is a pretty creature, while Andrew

Fairservice becomes the vehicle of many pithy Scotticisms. But the only figure thoroughly painted is that of Bailie Nicol Jarvie. The chief *motif* of the plot (a quest after certain commercial documents abstracted by Rashleigh) is so feeble that it needs effort to recall how the people have got into the situations described. Sir Walter was justly fond of the Bailie; but he did not care much for the novel altogether, said it 'smelled of the cramp'—for he dictated a good deal of it while writhing with pain—and was surprised at its success. Scott's impartiality in this book and elsewhere in describing Scotch character and manners I thought very noticeable. He takes care to provide a good deal of 'stage business'—for example, Frank's kissing Mattie; the Bailie singeing the Highlander; his hanging to the branch by his breeches; Andrew Fairservice dancing in alarm on the top of the cliff.

The steamboat pier is filled with herring-boxes, which come across from Loch Long, and the excellent fresh herrings are now abundant and appear at every breakfast. Two girls are flinging sticks into the water for a large black dog to fetch. 'Whose dog is it?' 'Oh, he belongs to *the shap*'—a sufficient account where there is but one shop for miles around. It is on the roadside, behind the inn, and is also the post-office. 'Shap,' by the bye, like so many words of the Scottish dialect, is nearer to Old-English than the modern 'shop.' *Ceáp* is bargain or sale, or thing for sale; *ceápan*, to buy; 'cheap' is contracted from 'good cheap,' that is, a good bargain; shop seems abbreviated from *ceáp setl*, say 'chap-stall;' and we still use 'chapman.'

The sun had gone down; but not 'o'er the lofty Ben Lomond,' since we were on its western side, and the summer moon spread her light over the dim forms of mountains, and glittered on the lake below. I thought how many localities in Scotland are connected with the songs of the country, and what an enhancement this is of life. Without song and

without history, the fairest landscapes look barren. But the songs must be native and genuine. 'MacGregor's Gathering'—

The moon's on the lake and the mist's on the brae, &c.—

belongs to this very scene, but I don't care for it, 'tis theatrical. 'Jessie, the Flower o' Dunblane,' on the other hand, though not first-rate, is natural and pleasing, and the sun setting o'er the lofty Ben Lomond is a piece of landscape truth that must come home to every one at Dunblane and other places eastward of that rocky pyramid.

Through moonshine and shadow I returned, contented, to Valley Cottage, and slept soundly. Next day, a warm and bright Sunday, I walked to the head of Loch Long. The green sea-water and olive sea-wrack, the fishing-boats with their nets drying on the beach, and the bare mountain slopes, offered points of contrast with the wooded fresh-water lake from which this firth is only separated by a neck of land some two miles across. The strange rocky crest of 'the Cobbler' is now in full view, with Glencroe to the westward; but I doubled back upon Loch Lomond by a north-eastern valley, first along a path shaded by alders and hazels, with meadow-sweet here and wild raspberries there. It passed through a small farm-steading, and crossed the meadows to one or two little thatched cottages that lurked among the rocks and rough mounds where the ground began to rise. Here, at a low wall of rude stones, sat, stood, and lounged half-a-score people, chatting in Gaelic and wiling away their Sabbath afternoon. The scene was the exact counterpart of what I had many a time seen among the Irish hills. Followed by their curious looks, I pushed on into the world of heather and solitude, soon losing all trace of a path, and after some time came to the edge of a steep glen full of trees, hiding a rocky brook. Down one side I slid, climbed the other, mounted a knoll, and saw a dark, quasi-triangular

piece of water afar, set in among the wide, brown, lonely slopes, which I knew must be Loch Lomond. Soon after, the huge bulk of Ben Voirlich, whose head had long been in view, stood well defined across a rough moorland, and the desire, as usual, began to take hold of me of reaching its summit. By-and-by, a rapid, rocky river disclosed itself, but I was able to find a fording-place, and soon began to toil up one steep ascent of slippery grass after another, making in succession for this and that huge castellated rock, and sending the frightened sheep a-gallop. Then came a steep slope covered with loose pieces of flat stone, crowned with a broken mural barrier of rocks against the sky. This surmounted, the usual trial of patience ensued—it was by no means the true summit. A second effort was to be made, a third, nay a fourth, ere the indisputable ‘tip-top,’ with its landmark cairn, was conquered.

The view from the top of Ben Voirlich was nowise beautiful; it was vast, desolate, dismal, almost appalling. All the woods, all traces of cultivation, were sunk out of sight in the glen and vales; far or near, not a house, not a hut, not a road, not a track; a circle of perhaps 150 miles in view, one wilderness of barren mountains. There was no picturesque grouping of forms. The unclouded but hazy sun, now verging to the west, shed no colour upon the monotonous expanse of ugly brown lumps. A corner of a lake visible here and there was like a piece of dark gray slate let into the brown desolation. I understood fully for the first time the horror and disgust with which it was customary to talk of mountainous regions, before our modern fashion of eulogy set in. The dreariness of the panorama was heightened by just a touch of anxiety about finding my way down before sunset. This I managed to do, but not without difficulty, failing to hit any proper track, and part of the way literally climbing down the nearly dry bed of a torrent by rock and branch. In the descent, the landscape

put on its picturesque glories of form and colour, light and shadow of the sun's last rays shooting magnificently athwart a mighty glen, with a dark tarn below. One raven flew across the gulf as I gazed. At sunset I found myself on a path among the lower fields, where for a few minutes I sustained a very sharp assault from a flying squadron of gnats—or 'midges' as they are called here and in Ireland. There were still long miles to walk to the hotel and much longed-for supper.

I suggested to the landlord that in fine summer weather many a tourist would be glad to sleep under canvas in some corner of the beautiful grounds belonging to the hotel, and he seemed to think the idea a good one.

On Monday, coach to Loch Long, and steamer down that fine salt firth to Dunoon. There was a party of sprightly young Scotch ladies on board, with whom I was lucky enough to enjoy some agreeable conversation. Passing the mouth of Loch Goil, we recalled the ballad of 'Lord Ullin's Daughter,' and repeated it among us. A doubtful line was supplied by a decent farmer-like man who had been listening. This familiarity with their native poets is a pleasing trait in the Scotch. Among no people perhaps are poetical associations so little regarded as among the average English of all classes. In this respect the southern and east-midland counties are the most obtuse, doubtless as being the most Saxon. With the mixture of Keltic and of Scandinavian elements a greater susceptibility to music and poetry is found. In Ireland the knowledge of native poetry is confined to a small and decreasing proportion of the inhabitants; and English poetry, even to the English speakers, has some touch of alienism. Irish-English (which has never been properly examined) is full of little peculiarities. I do not allude to grammatical errors, but to unusual forms, some of them old-fashioned English, some translated or adapted from Gaelic forms. Yet it cannot be taken as a distinct

dialect, like the Scotch. Among other 'Irish difficulties' therefore is this well-nigh insurmountable one, of writing any good *popular* poetry. A Gaelic poet, if one came, would have a very small audience; a writer of classic English flies a little over the people's heads, and is not in connection with their familiar habits and traditions; to write *Irish-English* effectively one would need very special opportunities; and, at best, the associations with the past would be neither ancient nor happy; and the audience must still be a limited one and (worst of all) far from homogeneous in its sympathies. Very different from the case of the Scottish dialect, ancient and respectable in its historic and literary associations, and the familiar tongue of a number of people strongly united in character and sentiment. I don't see the possibility of an Irish Burns. Still, some not unimportant poetic result might possibly be attained by the union of poetic genius with a knowledge at once familiar and exact of Irish life, and of Irish-English idioms.

My fair acquaintances in the steamer were, like most of their country, very unwilling to admit any cousinship of Scotland with Ireland; they frankly laughed at the notion that 'Scot,' down to the ten hundreds and later, meant Irishman and nothing else, and that 'Albyn' was the usual name of their beloved land in the old times. I quoted Campbell—

For never shall Albyn a destiny meet
So black with dishonour, so foul with defeat—

and asked what they supposed 'Albyn' to mean? One said at random 'England;' but their notions were shaken when the meaning of 'York and Albany' was explained to them. I wonder how many people in the British Isles know what this familiar title conveys.

At Dunoon I landed and made it my head-quarters for a few days, one of the most delightful summering places I have ever seen. It stands on the shore of the lordly Firth

of Clyde, mountain-bordered, gay with a constant stir of ships and boats, has good bathing (without boxes or botherations, in spite of much building, for the coast-line is of grand extent), rural walks inland; and you have but to step aboard a steamer to be wafted away through magnificent scenery to Lomond and its sister lakes, to Ayr and the land of Burns, to Oban and the Hebrides, or, if you have need of it, to the great City with its shops and crowds, lying unseen and unheard at the back of those eastern hills.

I walked a couple of miles inland to a rough heathery knoll, and, lying under the fir trees, enjoyed the vast prospect; southward spread the sea shut in with mountains; to the north rose those peaks round the head of Loch Long, which I had left in the morning; and near at hand was visible the Holy Loch, a branch of Loch Long, on whose shore is the family burial-place of the Argyle family. The young Heir of the Campbells and his Princess-Bride were coming to Inverary in a few days. And a few years hence—but let me not *Hamletise* on the subject of a honeymoon, this golden August evening, amidst the splendour of sea, sky, and mountains.

On the shore at Dunoon stands the Castle-hill, with its fragments of ancient wall, commanding another glorious prospect of the grand ocean lake, and from this I saw the coloured sunset melt and fade over the peaks of Arran, and the stars kindle, answered by the near lights in the anchored ships. Later, for one never could have enough of such weather and such a place, I wandered along the margin of the flowing tide, filled with phosphorescence to a wonderful degree, every ripple along the endless beach alive with diamond sparkles; hand or stick moving in the water drew after it a turbulence of silver flame, or splashed up a fountain of harmless fiery coruscations. This was a delightful day. So was the next, when I walked to Inellan, swam in the bright salt wave, gazed on the purple peaks of Goatfell. A

flying steamer carried me up the Clyde, and another down again. Conveniency and cheerful bustle of life, and ennobling solitude amidst large and magnificent scenery, are more reconciled at Dunoon than at any place I know in the British Islands.

Glasgow, huge factory and seaport of a plutonic realm of iron and coal, which has outrivalled all the world in building iron ships, and whose population grows by the fifty thousand and hundred thousand, I visited, and trod for some dreary hours her great, busy streets of dark gray stone, great shops, swarming dirty bye-ways, dismal quays, along the dirty river and bare 'Green,' spread with acres of clothes a-drying. I saw the stately old Cathedral—(the spire ought to be carried up to a sharp point; this would make a great difference in the external aspect of the building), and its massive, solemn crypt, fit cavern-church for mortuary services; saw the Necropolis on the hill beyond, out-vying all other things of the kind in its crowd of monumental absurdities; the old University Buildings, now in process of degradation into a railway station; and the new University on its hill, among the fair groves and slopes of Kelvin Park—an improved situation certainly, compared with the ragged frowsy streets, in which its predecessor was imbedded. Descending through many gray stone palaces of merchantdom, I fled away gladly from the gloomy city. London streets are not always cheerful, but with London streets go London society, literature, art, music, libraries, museums, picture-galleries, theatres; as well as endless varieties of life, thought, and work. No one by free choice lives in any large town but the Metropolis.

RAMBLE THE SEVENTEENTH.

AULD AYR.

[1871.]

FROM Dunoon I took the steamer to Ayr, sliding along the coast by quiet Largs and the masts of busy Ardrossan, busy Troon, and so into the harbour of Ayr with its coasting vessels and fishing boats. Here my first thought was, how curiously little of sea or sea-coast life has come into Burns's poetry, local and personal as it is. Sailors and fisher-folk had little attraction for him. Our steamer was the 'Bonnie Doon.' A blind man on board sung to his fiddle a great number of songs, chiefly Burns's, and sung them well. There were a few Jacobite ditties, and also Scott's melodramatic 'MacGregor's Gathering;' but Burns was the staple, and we had 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and 'Bonnie Doon,' and—very well given—that characteristic ditty, 'The Rigs o' Barley':—

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn-rigs are bonnie, O!
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie, O!
I kent her heart was a' my ain;
I loved her maist sincerely, O!
I kissed her owre and owre again,
Amang the rigs o' barley, O!

.

I hae been blithe wi' comrades dear ;
 I hae been merry drinkin', O !
 I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear,
 I hae been happy thinkin', O !
 But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
 Tho' three times doubled fairly, O !
 That happy, happy night was worth them a',

—so the fiddler sung the line, with a *happy* duplication and an exulting flourish in the melody—

Amang the rigs o' barley, O !

No music-hall or nigger-minstrel strains intruded themselves. I gave him a second fee therefore, with the remark on the pleasure it was to find a man singing the songs of his native land. This seemed to gratify the poor musician ; he smiled, turned up his sightless eyeballs, and called out 'hear, hear!' with hearty independence. At the Queen's Head on the quay I found good quarters, and sallied forth to survey the town, which has some 18,000 inhabitants. In its main street, where are several old gabled houses, and in its 'Twa Brigs' it keeps much the same aspect as it had in Burns's time. At a bookseller's I bought a neat and legible edition of *Burns's Poems*, complete, 448 pages, with woodcuts, price fourpence half-penny, and with this in my pocket walked through the fair-green, and so along the rural road to Alloway and the Brig o' Doon. Less than two miles out I reached some white-washed, thatched cottages by the roadside ; one, which was like hundreds of roadside *sheebens* in Scotland and Ireland, having a signboard on its low side-wall. But this cottage, which I had nearly passed without particular notice, is not only 'licensed to sell spirits and ale,' but is moreover 'The Birthplace of Robert Burns.'

I passed the cottage, and soon came to a new edifice of the Established Church of Scotland on the left-hand side of the road, and opposite to this a simple old country graveyard, with the roofless and ivied walls of a little church, shaded with

some tall trees,—Kirk Alloway. There the road branched into two, in front of a good-sized inn, one road to the right leading to the New Brig over the river Doon, the other to the Auld Brig; and on a knoll over the old, narrow, left-hand road, I saw the Burns Monument; a mason-work basis, twenty feet high, lifting a little circular Greek Temple of nine Corinthian columns, covered in at top with a flattish cupola, and surmounted (a questionable finish) with a large bronze tripod. The whole edifice is sixty feet high, and stands in a neat flower-garden and shrubbery, overlooking the glen of the Doon and its 'auld brig.' In the under story is a circular chamber, with some Burns relics, among them the Bible, in two volumes, which he gave to Highland Mary, laid open under a glass case, so that you may read the texts he wrote on the fly-leaves. The room contains a copy of Nasmyth's portrait; also a fantastic (not ideal) bust, with wide nostrils and flying hair; and some sketches of Ayrshire scenes made celebrated by the bard. There is moreover a collection of the best editions of Burns's Works, costly or cheap, a striking evidence to the eye of this poor peasant rhymers influence upon mankind. This Burns Monument, it struck me, and the Church of Scotland over the way, are in a manner rival fanes. The poor peasant who had many a time come under the ban of orthodoxy, has now temples of his own, and inexhaustible audiences. I think there was no copy here from the innumerable editions published in America, where Burns, we are told, outgoes all other writers whatever in steady popularity. In a grotto in the shrubbery are placed the life-size statues of 'Tam o' Shanter' and 'Souter Johnnie,' carved in rough whin by Thom, a self-taught rustic sculptor; and the famous cronies sit eternally drinking to each other, with a life-like expression of drollness and jollity.

A few steps between the hedge-rows brings me to the Auld Brig, whose lofty, narrow, single arch shagged with

ivy, and overhung with large trees spans the waters of the Doon, rushing and eddying down their rocky bed. Intensely local and personal is the poetry of Burns. He wrote from the feeling of the hour, and used the objects, human and landscape, that were familiar to him. The places named on Tam's midnight ride are all on the old road (now superseded) from Ayr to Kirk Alloway, and the incidents connected with them were well known to every one in the neighbourhood.

By this time he was cross the foord,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
An' past the birks an' meikle stane,
Where drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
An' thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
An' near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—

The thrice-famous poem is, after all, but the fantastic narrative, spiced with indecorum, of a tipsy adventure; but the writing is wonderfully close, vigorous, and artistic; homely humour combines without a jar with passages of high poetic beauty; and the whole thing has a rare completeness. Burns wrote this ('his own favourite poem' he calls it) at Ellisland, for Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland*.

I made my way past a large new cornmill, which blocks up the margin of the Doon, and found myself straying by clear water, flowing and rippling, under shade of trees, through tranquil meadows and grassy slopes. The first version of the famous song is much better than the altered one which Burns made to fit music of Stephen Clarke. The heroine of the lines (we are told) was Miss Kennedy of Dalgarrock, 'a young creature, beautiful and accomplished, who fell a victim to her love for McDouall of Logan.'

Ye flowery banks o' Bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care! &c.—

And here at last is the Doon, familiar name to my heart as I wandered on a time, I too solitary, by the banks of a no less lovely stream, accompanied with dreams and hopes.

O sweet ! to stray and pensive ponder
A heartfelt sang.

Musing on many things, I left the shady banks of the river by a path winding upwards to a country road, and so back to Alloway Kirk, and over the stile into the burial-ground, filled with tombstones old and new. Just opposite the iron gate is an upright stone—' Sacred to the memory of William Burns, Farmer in Lochlie, who died 13 Feb. 1784, in the 63rd year of his age, and of Agnes Burns his spouse, who died on the 14th January 1820, in the 88th year of her age. She was interred in Bolton churchyard, East Lothian. Also of Isabella, Relict of John Begg, their youngest daughter, born at Mount Oliphant, 27 June 1771, who died 4 Dec. 1858,' &c. &c.

The simple little roofless church, evidently of pre-Reformation date, is about fourteen yards by seven. It has two doorways, through the grating of which you see the interior, occupied by several large tombstones.

A church, it has been remarked, was an odd place for Old Nick and his witches to hold their revels in, but it must be remembered that the notion of the *consecration* of any building or place is entirely alien from the Presbyterian mind. A poet writing under the influences of English Protestantism, even, would hardly have laid the scene in such a place.

The east gable carries a shroud of ivy, the west gable is pierced with a small gothic window of two lights, and topped with a quaint little stone belfry, which probably once upheld a cross. Over all hang the boughs of a large sycamore. Across the low wall at the back of the burial-ground you look into an extensive and rich meadow, at the end of which

stands a large new mansion among trees. Returning to the road, the new church stares you in the face, and there is also a new cottage of gentility, with its greenhouse, and the new hotel hard by, all spruce and smug.

But here, a quarter mile nearer to Ayr, is the whitewashed cottage by the roadside, to all appearances unaltered since William Burness plastered up its clay wall. The late evening sun shines on its whitewashed wall and sign-board. I enter, not as tourist but as wayfarer, pass a counter and glass-case with photographs, &c., and enter the inner chamber. The fire of mixed peat and coal, set in a projecting iron cage in the midst of a large chimney nook with stone cheeks (those from which the clay walls partly fell away once on a time), throws its light first on two little bare-legged girls, one in a high-backed chair, reading, the other basking on the hearthstone in company with a small dog; on an old dresser fastened to the wall, full of common crockery, with some pots and kettles underneath; on several tables and chairs; and on three stout men, like cattle-dealers, drinking whisky at a round table—moreover, on a box bed, in a recess of the wall, with short curtains of coarse blue and white check. Between the bed and the dresser is a window of four small panes, with a little scrag of blue and white check for eyebrow, and on the other side of the bed a dark-complexioned, old-fashioned upright clock stands against the wall, like the sentinel of Time. The floor is of irregular old flag-stones, and the whole aspect of the room, we may believe, is essentially the same as it was in the time of William Burness. One door opens beside the clock, another, perhaps of later date, near the corner of the fireplace.

I called for some ale, and sat with it in a corner. The landlady, a widow under forty, fat and fair, brought more whisky to the three sturdy cattle-dealers, or farmers, at the round table, and stood for a while listening, nothing loth, to

their broad jests, in broad Scotch, anent her marrying again. They laughed loudly as several supposed suitors for her hand were hinted at, and one man tilted back his chair till his shoulder leaned on the edge of the box bed set in the wall behind him—the bed in which Robert Burns drew his first breath.

Then came in a good-looking young fellow of three or four-and-twenty, like a well-to-do farmer's son, and greeted the others, but sat at a small table by himself, near the fire, where he filled and lighted a long pipe of tobacco and drank ale with it. He was waited on by a comely dark-eyed 'hizzie' about eighteen, bare-legged, with loose bodice and scant blue petticoat, to whom he was no stranger; and, in some rather rough passages of flirtation between them, his pipe got broken.

Scene, manners, language—could the ghost of Burns have peeped in, he would have found here no reminder of the lapse of a century of human history. This sight of the famous poet's birthplace was most impressive, in a curious and unexpected fashion.

In the flat kale garden has been built a big room for festive occasions, luckily without interfering with the simplicity of the old cottage. This room is decorated with portraits of Burns and his friends, and with other memorials of the bard.

I walked back to Ayr with a sense of inward gain, taking a road nearer the sea on the chance of catching a glimpse of one of Burns's nieces, but the Miss Beggs's neat, rustic cottage showed no face at door or window. The descendants of remarkable men are to me always subjects of curiosity. I would fain catch a hint or reminiscence of celestial light on their faces. In the old part of the High Street I turned into a quaint thatched tavern, 'The Tam o' Shanter,' with the sign-board,

Chairs
& Caup

A. GLASS.

are in the
House

and over this a picture of Tam setting forth on his famous ride. Here I asked for supper, and sat by choice in the old-fashioned kitchen. A stout, fresh, bare-legged girl set knife and fork at a corner table, while Mrs. Glass unhooked a piece of bacon from the chimney, and the frying-pan soon sent forth its agreeable hissing, to which even the sensitive ear of an actor would soon have become reconciled. Mr. Glass, a short, rubicund man, joined me affably over a trifle of hot toddy, and I quaffed a health out of the 'caup' or cup—an old wooden beaker out of which (Mr. Glass assured me) Burns drank many a draught in this very kitchen. In an upper room are pointed out two old high-backed chairs, as those which were usually occupied by the originals of Tam and Souter or Shoemaker Johnnie in their friendly boozings. Mr. Glass overflowed with quotations from Burns and reminiscences of his career, but nothing new of any importance came to light.

Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses, for honest men and bonnie lasses, is, I must say according to my own slight experience, a somewhat disorderly place. As I turned into 'The Shanter' a gaunt bareheaded woman on the causeway hard by, was roaring out drunken curses and snatches of songs to the amusement of a group of neighbours and passers by. A very large town-policeman was seen approaching with slow and dignified steps, and the woman (like her of the weatherglass) disappeared up a narrow entry. As I issued forth from mine inn, a mild starry night invited me to cross the Auld Brig. The narrow lane leading to it with its old rough-cast houses are just as Burns knew them. From the ambush of a dingy corner or gateway issued three or four women, bareheaded and barefooted, evidently of the

lowest possible class, and beset the way to the bridge. Having passed over to the dim-lighted open space beyond the water, other prowlers of the tribe made their appearance; two of them were engaged in mutual vituperation; and before I had reached the New Brig, the sound of shrieks and curses told of a furious personal encounter between those female outcasts. This left no agreeable impression on the mind, such as one would fain carry into the realms of sleep. The star of Burns's memory which rose for me sweetly over the tree-tops of Doon, was now clouded over with murky vapours. Wandering, musing alone, by flowery river-brink—mixing in a drunken 'spree'—rhyming out of either mood—leaving a jumble of things clean and unclean bound together by the strong tie of his genius—a run of unhappy thoughts in connection with the Poet for whose sake I was in Ayr, forced themselves upon my mind.

Next day I went eleven miles by rail to Mauchline, a rather straggling village of small houses, whose industry now is making fancy articles of wood, boxes, paper-knives, &c. Many are adorned with tartan patterns, which are printed on paper, firmly pasted or glued on, and covered with a thick varnish. Most of the village girls of Mauchline are employed thus. It seems a light and pleasant occupation, with a touch of the artistic. In a workshop which I visited, numerous engravings and coloured sketches hung on the walls, to be copied by hand on the more costly boxes; portraits of Garibaldi, Burns, Princess Louise, Empress Eugénie (a star in the ascendant, a star in eclipse), Scottish landscapes and buildings, and so on.

I enquired for Mossgiel of two men in the street, one of whom gave me the requisite direction; while the other, who was like a cattle-dealer, said he had often wished to see Mossgiel too (being only an occasional visitor to Mauchline), and so gave me his company, which was more than I had bargained for. However, he was little troublesome, and

made no remark of any kind whatever concerning Burns. A mile of a flat, rather wide grass-bordered road, brought us to a little copse of trees, through which a footpath, a near-cut, led diagonally across a rough grass field to the farmstead of Mossgiel, a plain, ugly, two-storey, slated dwelling-house, with rude flower-garden inside a wooden fence in the front, and a yard at the back partly surrounded by a range of slated byres and other outhouses. The farmer came to us—a grave elderly man, of few words, who, without any show of either reluctance or readiness, consented to show us round.

When Mr. Robert Chambers was here, he found the place much the same as in the Poet's day—a thatched house, which struck him as more comfortable than the average of such in Ayrshire; and he was thrilled to find himself in the little room where the young peasant had written down and kept in his table-drawer so many world-famous verses. When Nathaniel Hawthorne visited Mossgiel about the year 1856, he found the whitewashed stone cottage with weeds among its thatch, and altogether with an aspect of poverty and neglect. It was old, and doubtless narrow and uncomfortable; but I suspect further that our friend the farmer was purposely letting it go to the bad faster than need have been, with an eye to the re-edification which he was probably then urging on his landlord, and which has since been effected. About twelve years ago, the cottage and its outhouses were almost rebuilt. The ground-plan and some of the lower courses of the stones still remain, and that is all. Could not the landlord have built his tenant *another* cottage, and left Burns's Mossgiel on the face of the world? Say it would have cost something to keep and preserve it, a rich gentleman might find many worse uses for a few pounds. It is not on every manor that such a cottage stands. To put it in another light, by which even the spectacles of a Jew stockbroker might recognise something 'practical' here,

supposing all visible relics of Burns removed from Ayrshire, what would be the effect on the steamboat and railway traffic of the locality? But Burns's Mossiel is improved away, and Colonel Alexander, 'by way of compensation,' the farmer said, has sent the original manuscript of the song of 'The Lass o' Ballochmyle' (Miss Wilhemina Alexander), with its accompanying letter, framed and glazed, to hang in the new parlour. 'This beautiful estate of Ballochmyle,' says Hawthorne, 'is still held by the family of Alexanders, to whom Burns's song has given renown on cheaper terms than any other set of people ever attained it.' The farmer took down the frame off the wall, and we read the writing. Then my companion, who had hitherto been stolid as one of the oxen in which he probably deals, remarked that he thought he knew the tune, and struck up 'The Lass o' Ballochmyle,'

'Twas even—the dewy fields were green.

in a rather high and not unmusical voice, and went through with it, helped now and again by the old farmer.

The field where the daisy was once turned up by a plough-share remains, with its old fence, just behind the farmyard; and a slope to the westward is pointed out as the scene of 'The Mouse.' A great number of Americans come to Mossiel, the farmer told us; and there have been more this year than ever.

At Mauchline the churchyard of 'The Holy Fair' remains, but the church has been rebuilt. On the site of Poosie Nansie's beggars' lodging-house stands a trim little 'Co-operative Store.' Bonnie Jean's residence, too, has been a good deal altered.

Seeking for some one who could talk of Burns, I found an old tailor, a thin old man, who 'hirpled' down stairs to see me. He minded well the Burns family living at Mossiel, (i.e. Gilbert and old Mrs. Burns) but his own father in

earlier days would not have any correspondence with the Burns's, on account of Robert's character. 'Decent folk did-na think much o' him at that time.' This was all I gathered from the old tailor.

Alloway, Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, Mossgiel, Edinburgh, Ellisland, Dumfries,—Nelly Kilpatrick, Elizabeth Paton, Jean Armour, Highland Mary, Clarinda, Peggy, and many others flit before me—the peasant, the rhymester, the excise-man, with his hopes, enthusiasms, struggles, vices, remorse, disgraces, *tedium vite*, and death at thirty-seven,—a great original Poet, honest, simple, cordial, and, at the same time, by instinct, a true poetic artist, using the old Scottish dialect, and raising it once and for ever into a classic tongue; his songs household words over the globe; his fame one of Scotland's dearest possessions.

Burns was in money a poor man (though he had more than ever his father had), but as a poet, wealthy; he inherited the old form of speech from the old songs and song-lore of his native land.

Enough for meditation, as I wandered by the sea rippling cheerfully up its sands that stretch westward from Ayr, and embarking again on board the '*Bonnie Doon*,' steamed away across the mouth of Clyde, in view of Ailsa Craig.

RAMBLE THE EIGHTEENTH.

LONDON BRIDGE TO CABOURG.

[1873.]

IT was delightfully simple and easy. You breakfasted at the usual time, took a cab to St. Katherine's Wharf, stepped on board the General Steam Navigation Company's vessel the *True Briton*, started when St. Paul's and the crowd of City churches were announcing mid-day, glided down the populous Thames, gradually broadening into the German Ocean, dined, saw the sun of August setting over England, 'turned in,' slept (I usually sleep well at sea), and woke with morning shining over *la belle France* and gilding the coasts of Calvados and the heights above Havre. We should land at ten o'clock at the latest—in excellent time for *déjeuner* at some convenient hotel. Such was the theory.

Thursday morning came. It was cold, damp and windy. The cab did its function, after running the gauntlet through certain boatmen and porters who tried to persuade us that there was not an instant to lose, and we were deposited in a bare, cheerless waiting-room. The *True Briton* was 'in the stream,' and after a long wait we descended two or three flights of wet and slippery wooden steps to the lower platform of the wharf, among fellow-passengers, loaded porters, the humbler folk anxiously struggling with their own luggage,—one poor little woman had five children to take care of, and a crowd of bundles and baskets—and then, one by one, we were half lifted, half dragged by two stout sailors into a very

small boat, that tossed up and down with the usual sportive malice of such craft. Our boat was the first of several, and carried Palinurus himself, a stout, broad-shouldered man of near seventy in a pea-jacket and round hat, with gray beard, ruddy complexion, and twinkling blue eyes, a pleasant, good-humoured face, but expressing self-opinionativeness, irascibility, and ignorance. The expression of ignorance is a distinct thing in physiognomy. He considered himself a humourist; and the superiority to all interlocutors, which nearly every sea-captain asserts in some way or another, took in him the form of jocularly, half condescending, half contemptuous. But the jokes, in fact, were not very brilliant. When a passenger timidly enquired at what hour we were likely to reach Havre, the Captain fixed his little blue eyes upon him, and after some pause replied in a loud, strong voice, 'I'll tell you that to-morrow morning, sir,' and then his blue eyes twinkled with conscious triumph. We scrambled up the ladder of the *True Briton*, and found ourselves on board a wood-built paddle steamer over forty years old (as proved by the date on her bell), clumsy and roomy, and much in want of a little fresh paint. The old Captain no sooner touched the deck than he began to roar out his orders with powerful lungs, intermingling no few oaths. There was something wrong; the steamer's moorings had 'fouled' those of a barge, and the consequence was that, after much shouting and swearing, the City clocks said a quarter to one, instead of noontide, when we began to slowly glide away from them; and London Bridge, the Custom House, and the Tower withdrew into a mingled cloud of smoke and rain.

It seemed odd enough that the Captain had not taken his post sooner, and the vessel been kept clear of intrusive barges and ready to start at the appointed hour, cargo and passengers being all on board; but the thing was past praying for, we had lost three-quarters of an hour at the begin-

ning of our voyage, and crept down the river at a pace that did not yield much hope of making it up.

The passengers gazed with interest on what was visible of Wapping on the left hand, and asked the steward whereabouts the abode of Orton was situated. It was one comfort, nevertheless, to think that we were turning our backs upon the Tichborne Trial. Slowly we crept by stately Greenwich, pleasant Blackheath, Queen Elizabeth's Tilbury, and landed our pilot, a sad, silent, elderly man, at Gravesend. *True Briton* gave us a good dinner; the ship if slow was steady; the obliging and intelligent young steward hoped we should get in between nine and ten in the morning; we took a cheerful view of things, and went on deck again to bid Father Thames adieu. We found our old Captain (who had not shown at the dinner table) on the paddle-box-bridge in full nautical rig of oilskin; and we found him—alas!—unmistakeably tipsy. The rain had cleared off, and some stars showed in the twilight, but the wind, which was against us, and the sea, were both rising. The old Captain being asked a question as to the weather, answered very gruffly and rather incoherently, and proceeding to light a pipe dropped it in the course of the operation, and could only recover it after several staggerings and lurchings. Some of the ladies took alarm, and the steward was consulted, who made no attempt to deny the obvious condition of his superior officer, but thought the Captain after all knew well enough what he was about. The mate, moreover, was a steady, trusty-looking man; so most of the passengers one by one disappeared, no longer joyous, for the ship was already beginning to roll ominously, but with as much resignation as each could muster.

For my part I kept on deck after the night fell, watching the black line of shore on the right hand, and the successive clusters of lights that denoted Broadstairs, Margate, Ramsgate. This long thin row of lamps is Deal, and those two

great eyes of flame that glare into the darkness as we sweep past are the twin lighthouses on the South Foreland. But the head wind still increases, the ship rolls and pitches, 'tis full time to turn in.

I am not usually ill at sea, but I was this night for a short while, and heard sounds of agony on every side. At last the welcome daylight returned, and at seven I rose, had a good wash, dressed, and sat down on a sofa; the *True Briton* was pitching and rolling worse than ever, and tumbling things about the cabin; there was a cup of coffee on the table, and by an artful twist the sea jerked it off, spilt the coffee, and smashed the cup. Here comes the steward: 'Steward, how soon shall we be in?' Steward, gravely: 'Ah, sir, we're a long way from Havre yet.' 'But we must be off the French coast?' 'No, sir.' 'Then *when* are we likely to get in?' 'Some time in the afternoon, sir, perhaps two or three o'clock'—and the ship gave another lurch. I went to bed again, and after some time fell asleep. When I woke again it was night. We were off the harbour mouth, but at low water, and were, therefore, forced to 'lay to'—by no means the same thing as standing still—for *nine hours* in sight of the double beacon on Cap la Hève. At last, at two o'clock in the morning, we glided in between the long rows of gas-lamps that illuminate the piers and docks of the chief Atlantic port of the French Republic. It was a question whether we could get into any hotel at that hour, therefore we turned into our wretched berths once more (such of us as had been able to turn out), to re-assemble finally at breakfast at about half-past eight. Our old Captain came in while this meal was going on, and with undiminished self-satisfaction said sententiously, 'Well, ladies and gentlemen, you've had a *safe* passage.'

We were forty-four hours on board this steamer, instead of twenty-one or two. During a space of four-and-twenty hours I ate nothing, drank nothing, read nothing, saw

nothing, heard nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing but a sense of vague ugly discomfort and incapacity. The General Steam Navigation Company to Patricius Walker, Drs. To one whole day lost out of his life. At what figure am I to put it? How much in pounds, shillings, and pence would I have sold it for?

Along Havre quay (which I remembered of old) the tall, yellow houses, full of windows with green shutters, the workmen in blouse and sabots, the gendarmes in cocked hat and sword and blue coat with cotton frogs and epaulettes, gave the usual evidence of a foreign land, though the French rain was falling in a way that strongly resembled English. Rue de Paris, gay and busy nevertheless, with a great dock full of ships abutting on it midway, the theatre opposite, and the handsome Hôtel de Ville at the end, in its garden, behind which rise the wooded hills whose semi-circle encloses the town and carries the protecting series of forts; the oddly painted shops, and rough gutters of the bye-streets, and queer smells, and the interior of the large church with its pictures and shrines, and heavy flavour of incense, and kneeling peasant-women in pure white caps; all certified to the same effect—that we had actually crossed the Channel, —were in the neat, negligent, gay, tawdry, polished, ignorant, devout, licentious, dainty, nasty, logical, silly, self-contradictory, unmistakeable, paradoxical, and unaccountable country of France.

But certainly other countries have their puzzles. Why in England, the home of steam and punctuality, should railway trains be habitually late? I do not believe that one train in seven throughout England keeps its appointed times. And this steamer, belonging to a great company, starting from the mighty London itself to the chief Channel port of France—what a muddle the voyage has been!

After breakfast I crossed the broad mouth of the Seine in a little steamer to Honfleur—quaint old dark-gray town

below its wooded hills, with tall old houses round the inner harbour, clad some of them from top to toe in scale-armour of slates—and climbing the rough, narrow street, vines hanging here and there over a garden wall, and bright flowers seen sometimes through a courtyard gate, passed the Octroi at the upper end, and the oil-lamp ready for its nightly purpose hanging there by cord stretched across the way; and so up a long, sloping road over-arched with boughs to the green platform above, called the *Côte de Grâce*. Here, amid groups of trees and open grassy lawns, is the little chapel of *Notre Dame de Grâce*, protectress of sailors and fishermen, the goal of many pilgrims; and here, close by, the *auberge* where my good friends expect me. Ha! those are their handkerchiefs waving, and those their kind, welcoming voices.

Now this *auberge* gives at the back on an orchard; and the household—Monsieur and Madame, and their little daughter and nephew, and Louise, the little waitress, and Artus, the coachman, and Henri, the boy of all work, also Gretchen, our nursemaid—are accustomed to take their *déjeûners* under some old mossy apple-tree, throwing a sprinkled shade on the white cloth, the savoury *ragoûts* and *omelettes*, and the jugs of cider, while close round the table crowd the ducks and geese and hens picking up crumbs. A white cow grazes in the background, and behind the apple-tree-stems is drawn something like a gay light-blue curtain—the sea. That picturesque wooden barn in the corner is the apple store and cider-press; and all this, which we see from the windows of our *salle à manger*, is certainly very pretty. But it needs fine weather, and fine weather, alas! is scarce this summer; and when the orchard grass is soaked, and the fowls draggled, and the solitary road full of rain-pools, and the dim, gray sea mixed with the damp sky, our *auberge* is not a lively place. But who is Gretchen? The German nursemaid of my friend's children; a stout,

comely, good-natured lass from the Black Forest, who cannot speak three consecutive words of French; yet there she sits, the hated foreigner, in the midst of that family party, supping her potage and joining in the laughter and chatter with beaming face. So far from hating Gretchen, they make much of her, and, I believe, sometimes kiss her.

Still, Monsieur reserves his abhorrence of 'les Prussiens' in general, and rejoices in the prospect of being *débarrassé* of them. It appears that these brigands came to Honfleur, and every day some of them strolled up to the *Côte de Grâce* and drunk wine and cider at Monsieur's *auberge*, paying, however, it must be admitted, like any other customers, or probably rather more.

Into the opposite and more important town of Havre they did not seek to penetrate, having cut off its connections with the rest of the country; and this preservation from the invader was entirely due to the Blessed Virgin, as we learn from our newspaper; in gratitude for which service the women of Havre have subscribed money for a statue to Our Lady, to be cast in bronze, and twenty-four feet high. This item of news again reminds us that we are in a strange land,—though, indeed, what with Oratories, and Archbishops of Westminster, and Oblate Fathers, and Pilgrim Peers, it is not easy to say what we may not be coming to in England.

Another item of news in *L'Echo Honfleurais* informs us that Mr. Gladstone has become Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Bruce has been elevated to the post of Prime Minister. It is but seldom that the French papers deign to insert even one paragraph under the heading of *Angleterre*, and when they do, the information is often of a remarkable character. All at this present moment are proudly exultant at the magnificent style in which France has paid off her War Ransom—a feat whereon Europe is gazing with astonishment.

These French papers, even the Paris ones, are surprisingly

barren of news; and in most of them a sensational tale appears, chapter by chapter, of much the same level as those in our 'penny dreadfuls' which crisp the nerves of housemaids and schoolboys; though the French newspaper stories are probably better written and more improper than ours, and come into the hands of a higher social class. Here are the titles of current *feuilletons* in the journals that have lately come under my eye, including several of the leading daily papers: *L'Ecluse des Cadavres*; *La Vengeresse*; *Le Témoin du Meurtre*; *Le Sujet Anatomique*; *Le Bigame*; *Les Crimes de l'Amour*; and the favourite work just now at the book shops and railway stalls appears to be a series of stories by Xavier de Montepin under the general title of *Les Drames de l'Adultère*. *Le Journal Pour Rire* displays everywhere its very broad pictorial jokes, notwithstanding that France is supposed to be sitting at this moment in contrite sackcloth and ashes, and is not yet entirely disembarassed of those Prussians. One has heard of people dancing over a volcano, but the French go on dancing, the *can-can* by preference, immediately after an eruption, with the lava still hot and the ruins still smoking.

Yet look round—it is market-day in Honfleur—at these kind, placid, honest, pious faces of women and girls, buying and selling fruit, eggs, poultry, under the snow-white cap, old fashioned and new starched symbol of homely conservatism. Or go into this huge old barn-like Church and see similar caps and faces bent in earnest prayer before the Divine Mother and Babe—familiar and friendly, sublime and awful, the abstract of Mystic Humanity. Do they look wicked or frivolous? Are they anything like the ladies in the shop window, portrayed in the *Journal Pour Rire*?

Monsieur Victor Hugo lately described Paris as a new Mount Sinai. Its new decalogue, officially given, would be a remarkable code of rules for human guidance. Perhaps by precisely inverting each of the old commandments some-

thing like it might be obtained. But Paris, whatever has been said, is not yet France, luckily. France I believe is still a much better thing than Paris.

And now for a moment we have been looking at the *religious* aspect of Catholicism. But it is not only a Church; it is a vast Political Association, the most powerful in the world, and in that character certain statesmen are beginning to see the necessity of once more, and if possible once for all, *tackling* it.

I was twelve days at the *Côte de Grâce*, and it would have been thoroughly pleasant but for the too much rain. The orchard on these wet days was sodden, and no table could be spread under the boughs. As the fowls went about with clammy feathers, so every unfeathered biped was visibly depressed, for the French readily give way to their moods, and let you see them. Once, for example, when (in addition to the weather) Madame and Monsieur had a domestic quarrel, we were all under a cloud for some two days and got bad dinners. But in the bright intervals, blue sky overhead, the orchard grass dappled with sunshine, the iridescent sea glimpsing through leafy twigs, all went better; Madame and Monsieur and Louise and everybody cheered up; and for our part we hastened forth on a walk or a drive.

The cliff-edge, with its chapel to Our Lady, full of ship-models, and pictures of wrecks, associated itself in my mind with Browning's poem,

‘The votive frigate,
Soft aloft,’

and so forth; ending so oddly with Stephanie, who

‘Sprained last night her wrist,
Ankle or something,
“Pooh,” cry you’—

How mordant and memorable these Napoleonic rhyming audacities of R. B.! How interesting everything of Napo-

leon (not the *sham*) and of Browning! But woe to him that shall take either for a pattern.

In spite of the wet, I was often in Honfleur, and in those twelve days got used to it, and liked it all the more—the bird's eye prospect of its close packed gray roofs from the *Côte de Grâce*, the descent by winding shady road or zigzag bushy path, the narrow old street with Our Lady of Good Help in many a corner niche, the vines hanging over walls, tall old toppling gables (*Haute Rue* looked wonderful by moonlight), the harbour and shipping, the churches, the semicirque of wooded hills, the broad estuary in front, the wide, mile-long boulevard, bordered and almost roofed in with elms, leading out to the country, the beginning of a quondam 'Route Imperiale,' the latter word being now painted over with 'Nationale,' and the metal plate showing the number of *kilomètres* to Alençon and elsewhere. All these things combine in a pleasant recollection, peopled mainly with quiet blouses and white caps. Then there were the ramshackle diligences rattling in from Trouville; the town crier summoning his audience with bugle note; the sailors and fishermen along the quay; the black-robed broad-hatted priests gliding, and the beggars. The beggars were numerous (spite of notice boards defending all mendicity)—and especially haunted the church-doors. There was a fat old woman who sat from morning to night under a tree on the way up to the *Côte de Grâce*. She made some pretence of selling little pictures and crosses, but set up a whine for charity when anyone approached. She was particular in saluting the clergy as they passed, and I saw a tall priest take off his hat in return, as if to a duchess. She wore, *ex officio* as it were, garments all bepatched and bedarned, but warm enough, and in wet weather an old waterproof and a large umbrella. In fact, she was a sort of out-door priestess of the chapel, ready to perform the necessary passive part to those who wished to do an act of Christian almsgiving.

There was another old beggar-woman down in the town, questing from shop to shop, who always amused me. She was enormously fat, and tied in the middle like a great sack; she wore a nightcap of the elementary conical kind pulled down tight, and her fat, flat, absurd face was decorated with a huge pair of blue spectacles with black iron rims. A free use is made of spectacles in France, especially blue ones; you see cabdrivers, beggars, field labourers wearing them—and why not? But even in France I have never seen a *footman in spectacles*. That is inconceivable; and yet there would be nothing in it against nature.

One Sunday there was a grand *fête*: an agricultural show on the boulevard, and a duck-hunt in the inner harbour, and the march of booming and clanging bands and *fanfares*, and a competition of choirs in the theatre, all ending with a torchlight procession, almost drowned by the heavy rain. The choirs, six or seven, all of men, from neighbouring villages and towns, sung with meagre and nasal tones compared with English singing, but with better ‘attack’ and cessation. When the last chord was a loud one, the leaving-off was as sudden as if the conductor’s final cut with his *bâton* had slammed a door. The fair sex at Honfleur were, as a rule, quiet looking and comely, and very broad and fat; Hawthorne speaks, in scarcely gallant terms, of the bulk to which mature English women are apt to expand. But I don’t think they could hold a candle in this respect to their French sisters. What prodigious masses of femininity! market women, shopkeepers, fine ladies. There was, and still is, I trust, a bookselleress of such at once broad and circumambient, not by any means uncomely, magnificence of portliness, that I often gazed with mingled awe and admiration. And if she be greatest it is where many are great. A market woman speaking to a friend of mine about some customers whom she described as *Anglaises*, and being asked how she knew that, answered, *Parce qu’elles sont si maigres*. They carry it off

well, these fair moving mountains, and like all French-women accept frankly their natural fortunes. Even a French-woman who is so downright ugly that you are shy of looking at her, you will find if you do look at her is for her own part unembarrassed, and to all appearances quite unconscious of any ill-luck.

The notion that the English eat more than the French is also, I suspect, a mistake. Who in England could think of eating such a forenoon or meridian meal as the *déjeuner* is? Those with us who still dine at midday or one o'clock take a light breakfast, and the dinner is not a more and perhaps seldom so serious an affair as the *déjeuner*, and the supper, which is the only other serious meal, is nothing as compared with the regular six or seven o'clock *dîner*. But I would not be understood to undervalue the French notions of eating. The traveller, if he knows a little of the ways of the country, is on the whole incomparably better off in that respect than in England. Our *auberge* gave us at eight in the morning or so, a large bowl of excellent coffee and hot milk, with a roll; *déjeuner* at noon; dinner at half-past six. The milk, butter, eggs, and poultry were of home growth, and there was a fair supply of fish. Cider at discretion, or beyond it; but Bordeaux dearer than in England. As to drink, what shall we say? It is the accepted doctrine that there is little or no drunkenness in France. At meals no doubt most people hereabouts are content with cider or Bordeaux; but there is no little drinking of much stronger liquids at *cafés* and elsewhere from morning till night, and a drunken man is no rare spectacle. In Normandy the popular tippie is cider with a dash of coarse brandy in it, a very tipsyfyng compound. In all the public drinking rooms is hung a framed copy of the *Loi contre l'Ivresse Publique*, signed 'Thiers,' passed a couple of years ago, one article of which deprives the condemned drunkard of all power of public voting for a given time.

At the bottom of the steep, in some parts precipitous, bank on the top of which is our *Côte de Grâce*, winds, hidden by trees, the road to Trouville, and between this and the sea, looking straight down, one sees the old red-tiled roof of the Farm of Saint Simeon. Let us descend by zigzag paths, cross the road, and go through the little gate. All is free and simple; it is a favourite summer *habitat* of French artists. There are two with their easels under the apple trees, and appropriate hats and pipes, painting away, while round them, as in an Eden restored, wander ducks, hens, geese, pigs, a large lazy dog and several puppies. The interior, it must be owned, is the reverse of tidy, but, in revenge as they say, the walls and woodwork are enriched with a chaotic profusion of clever sketches, some in colour, some in black and white, landscapes, sea-pieces, figures, caricatures (and one or two of these rather broad), the loving work of many successive Bohemian lodgers. There are also inscriptions, of which here is one from the rough little low-ceilinged dining-room that looks out on the orchard: it is not a brilliant production, but has a pleasant extemporary touch:

À la Ferme Saint Simeon
 tout est beau, très bien et fort Bon,
 ce que se voit, se Boit, se mange.
 si le Cidre par fois Derange,
 à la Ferme Saint Simeon,
 ça tient le corps libre, et c'est Bon.
 la Fermiere de la maison
 fait la cuisine comme un Ange.
 vener manger c'est Bon ton
 à la Ferme Saint Simeon.

Quitting the farm-house and its precincts, a slatternly Paradise, let us go through a wicket in the hedge into this further orchard—what a delicious place!—grassy hillocks and dells, sun-dappled to-day, shaded with old twisted apple trees loaded with red and yellow fruitage, and several tall,

enormous pear trees ; on one side the bright sea rippling in, on the other the leafy cliffs rising to the sky, hung and crested with rich trees and varied verdure. A little path leads you in a moment to the seashore itself.

One day we walked down through the leafy woodland ways, and near the roadside crucifix of Vasouy took to the sea-strand, which, broken with many watercourses and quicksands, sweeps round towards Trouville. The sun shone and the sea was rippling greener than any spring meadow grass. On the sandbanks grew the stunted sea-thistle ; behind these were flat meadows with beds of reeds, and further inland the ranges of woody hills.

After some miles of this, we turned up again to the road, and came by-and-by to a little old church wrapped in thick ivy, a dozen poplars drawn up beside it like a guard of honour, and a large pool at the back half covered with water-weed where three or four washerwomen at one corner knelt and thumped away. Between the poplars and a clump of other trees one caught a glimpse of the sea. It was a picturesque scene, which a young lady was trying to make a picture of from under shade of an umbrella, a gentleman on the grass by her side looking on approvingly.

Passing through a little swing gate, we skirted the grassy embankment of the dammed-up pool, and, traversing a rough kind of lawn, drew near an old decayed manor-house (as it proved to be), at the side of whose broken steps lounged a sturdy-looking, mature man, in a blouse and old straw hat, smoking a short pipe.

We were about to turn back when he hailed us with a *Bon jour, messieurs !* slightly raising his rough headgear, and added that there were some curiosities to be seen inside if we cared to enter. Half unwillingly we mounted, each feeling in his pocket for a franc or half-franc, for which the value to be received was problematical, and our guide

showed us into a good-sized *salon* with a low ceiling, whose walls were covered with specimens of ancient wood carving, some of them very fine—groups, single figures, cabinets, panels. Not that it was a collection of any pretension—only the miscellaneous gathering of an amateur of taste and moderate means. As he went round, describing bit after bit in a careless, independent style, but sometimes warming into enthusiasm, it dawned upon us that the rough man in the blouse was himself the collector, and, moreover, that he was a man of education, intelligence, and even originality of character, who was in no way fishing for a fee, though, as we afterwards found out for ourselves, there was a catalogue which might be purchased if one chose.

After going round the collected wood carvings, we stumbled by chance on an oak panel about two feet long, carved in relief, which stood carelessly against the jamb of a little window in a corner, and to which our attention had not been called. One of us took it up, turned it various ways; both looked and both began to utter exclamations of delight and enquiry. What was this relief carved within a Gothic border, so bold, so effective, so self-restrained, though often rough in the mere manipulation—in short, so truly artistic in treatment? It was Brunhault tied to the tail of a wild horse. Where did it come from? The Frenchman looked at me, put one hand gently on his own forehead—*D'ici, monsieur*. Yours: what a wonderful design! *C'est vrai. Le cheval est magnifique*. And heaped on a chair in this corner we found twenty-five other carved panels of similar high quality, representing scenes in the early history of France, or rather of the Franks (Baptism of Clovis; his coronation at Rheims; Dagobert condemned by the bishops; Pepin the Short; Charles Hammer; and so forth), and turned them over with surprise and delight, the artist himself joining simply and openly in our praises of the work, and often pointing out further beauties. Seizing one of the

bits of wood, he set it by the side of an old cabinet with carved panels of much the same size ; then taking each of us by an arm, placed us at the right point of view : ‘ You see, gentlemen ! that old piece is the work of a famous hand, yet the new suffers nothing by comparison with it.’ It is his intention, he told us, to represent in this manner suitable scenes from the whole course of French history, perhaps two hundred in all. ‘ Including Louis Napoleon ? ’ ‘ Certainly.’ ‘ And Henry the Fifth ? ’ But to this perhaps indiscreet question the artist deigned no reply.

He was a man of some five-and-fifty, broad-shouldered, rather below the middle stature, with a large, well-shaped head, now the old straw-hat was doffed, ample forehead, and wide gray eyes which were intently fixed upon you while he talked or listened, but by no means with the effect of a stare or a pry ; they seemed to be gazing at the thought which the conversation was striving to put into words. Altogether he reminded us of the portraits of William Blake.

We tried to persuade him that he ought to have photographs taken of the twenty-six panels, and permit the sale of them in Paris, London, and elsewhere, since he never sold and never would sell any of the carvings themselves ; and this he half promised, but saw difficulties in bringing it about, showing himself perfectly aware that professional photographers are ‘ kittle cattle ’ to deal with. ‘ Do this,’ said I, ‘ and you are famous at a blow.’ ‘ *Monsieur,*’ he replied with calmness, ‘ *je le crois.*’ His manner throughout was grave, dignified, thoroughly self-confident, but not in the least self-asserting. He had not shown us his carvings, but when we found them out he accepted our praises without the shadow of a nay-forsooth, and added his own. We asked leave to visit him again, which was courteously granted, and on finding my companion to be an artist hailed him cordially as ‘ *confrère* ! ’ Many people, he said, came there who never looked at the panels ; others took one up

and put it down again without any notice. We were most welcome to come again, but to-morrow was his last day here: he came to this manor-house, the property of his family, for the summer months, and was now about to return to Sainte Marie-du-Mont, his habitual residence.

So away we went rejoicing, and duly returning the next day, had another and a longer look at the carved panels. We were no less struck than at first by the compact emphasis with which every subject was set forth, combined with an unailing instinct for true decorative treatment, wholly unconventional in manner and precisely adapted to the medium; dealing with human figures, animals, architecture, and a variety of natural and artificial objects, with an always successful power of composition. At the same time the rough and sometimes (compared with the best old carvings) unskilful manipulation of the wood became more apparent on this second examination.

This day we entered the little ivyclad church of Criquebœuf ('Ox-Creek')—for that is its name, and the name of the half-ruined manor-house also—and found against the wall, to the right of the altar, a quaintly-painted wooden statue, about four feet high, of Saint Martin, the patron saint. He sits on horseback, dividing his cloak with the beggar. This group, we learned from a woman who lived close by, was only a fragment till Monsieur le Docteur, over there, took it hand and made it as good as new. It is, in fact, a masterly piece of restoration,—*O si sic omnia!* And we further learned something of the artist of the old manor-house. He is a doctor of medicine, M. le Docteur Isidore le Goupils, and a very good one, but no longer practises; is rich, has a wife and five children, and his regular place of abode is Sainte Marie-du-Mont, of which town he has been Mayor. He comes every year, alone, for the summer months, to this old manor-house, which belongs to his mother-in-law. What does he do? Nothing, the woman

said. Except wood carving? Well, yes, he amuses himself in that way. Is generally thought to be a little . . . and here the dame touched her forehead and nodded, with a different meaning from the doctor's own similar gesture.

It must be confessed that the catalogue of wood carvings, of which we each bought a copy, gave some shadow of encouragement to the outsiders' theory. It is entitled *Guide du Voyageur autour du Salon de Criquebœuf*, and has an introduction addressed *Aux Futurs Visiteurs du Manoir de Criquebœuf*, and signed 'Ch. Manoury,' a friend and enthusiastic admirer of the Doctor. But this pamphlet, printed at Falaise, and dated 1868, says not a word of his original panels of French history, and, in fact, these must have been commenced later.

What seemed most likely, from what we read and what he himself told us, was that the Doctor gradually collected a number of old wood carvings from farm-houses and elsewhere in Normandy and Brittany; then tried his hand at restoring the missing parts of some which were mutilated; then, still more boldly, produced some carvings entirely his own; and, at last, as his treasures accumulated, conceived the notion of 'co-ordinating and arranging them in such manner as to compose a poem at once historic and religious.' Having composed this poem accordingly out of carved panels, wainscoting, statuettes, and pieces of old furniture, he christened it by an original name, *Le Catholicum*, and displayed it at a provincial art exhibition held at Saint Lo in 1866.

'Let us commence by an avowal,' says the *Guide*, 'the vast collection whereon M. le Goupils has imposed the new name of *Catholicum* . . . was received by the official public with supreme contempt.' The Doctor, it further appears, was subjected to a good deal of sneering ridicule, and, writhing under the sting, armed himself with his pen, which he steeped in gall, and answered his detractors in a literary work of no small magnitude. The descriptions in

the *Guide* are mainly drawn from this '*immense travail*,' and after having read them and visited the Salon of Criquebœuf itself, 'we may demand of ourselves (says the writer) how there could have been found any men of parts so Bœotian as not to comprehend, and so Prussian as not to approve the *Catholicum*.' Next year Doctor le Goupils resolved to instal his collection in the ancient manor-house. 'Having arrived there without scandal at the beginning of July, 1867, the *Catholicum*, still suffering from the fatigues and abuse of Saint Lo, completely re-established its health in the retreat of Criquebœuf, and after a few weeks was in condition to receive numerous visitors.' Then follow certain laudatory extracts, in prose and verse, from the Visitors' Book, which, as the author of the *Guide* shrewdly adds, he is content to take as serious, perhaps with a little of the blindness of a friend of the artist. One visitor, described as a distinguished man of letters, thinks M. le Goupils 'has surprised the secret of the sculptors of the sixteenth century.' Another writes, 'Courage, dear Doctor! You have received the baptism of the artist. May our praises, however feeble, enable you to forget the injustice of which you have been the victim! Courage, and

Versez des torrents de lumière
Sur vos obscurs blasphémateurs.

A lady ends her testimony with the following words: 'I say not it is beautiful; it is more than beautiful;'—on which the author of the *Guide* thus comments, 'O women, but I recognize you well there! always in extremes!'

Then follows an abridged *catalogue raisonné*, showing a great deal of curious research into the dates and subjects of the various carvings, along with an enthusiastic yet discriminating appreciation of their artistic merits. The first 'monument—or more modestly speaking—adjustment,' is composed out of various pieces of old carving, and is intended

as 'prologue to the sculptural poem.' The next piece is a chest, of about 1550, with figures of the Christian Virtues. The third is a Nativity with the flight of the Pagan divinities; the fourth, a figure of Hope; the fifth, two Amphitrites, a Venus, and a Pomona, 'completing the flight of Paganism'(!); the sixth, the Adoration of the Magi; the seventh, two statuettes, a Bishop and a Saint Lawrence. The eighth consists of two panels for a wainscot, representing two women, one sitting under a tree, the other by a river side; and these the Doctor calls 'two dreams,' but their connexion with his Christian Poems remains buried in the depths of his own imagination. The ninth—*un délicieux petit meuble*—is a box or credence carved with scenes from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, two of the panels being from the Doctor's own chisel; and so on, and so on, the objects enumerated in what he calls the Ancient Part being forty-two.

I must add a word or two about the Modern Part, wherein the Doctor's hobby-horse gets into full gallop. Here, he says, the entire conception of the work and a great part of the execution is his own. The modern carvings are displayed on the *ceiling*, in a circular arrangement of which the effect, we are told, would be 'grandiose and dazzling,' if placed at a greater height. In point of fact the ceiling is a low one and the effect rather comical. He divides it into twelve parts, described in as many 'explorations,' and to which he has given fanciful names, the central carving being called *Le Gouffre*, and representing a human figure swallowed up by the jaws of destruction. 'The object devoured is nude, and this has disgusted certain observers; but for my part (adds the Doctor, humourously triumphing over these critics) I know not what might be the suitable dress for those who allow themselves to be swallowed by the Pit.' Over the Pit is a crown with the inscription: *Salon fait par le docteur I. le Goupils avec l'aide d' E. Groult* (1865). Next to this is the circle called the Slopes of the Abyss, in which appears Time

with his scythe, a sinister owl predicting death, birds of prey, figures of Luxury and Gluttony, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, a skeleton sitting on a pontifical tiara and playing on a violin, while the tools and emblems of many human occupations dance pell-mell to the music. The next circle, *Indifference*, shows a number of figures 'killing time with trivial amusements.' The fourth circle is termed *The Circumvallation*—interlaced dragons, and symbolical figures of Avarice, Anger, Envy, and, above all, two Prides—Pride 'mother of all vices, and to whom the dragons do homage,' and Pride National, a matron crowned with towers, garlanded with laurel, and wearing a cross of honour. (There is something in this, Doctor.) In the fifth place we see the Divine Personages, with Piety, Wisdom, &c.; in the sixth, Faith, Hope, and Charity; in the seventh, *The Two Testaments*, represented by Moses and a female figure. Then come the Angels of Promise and of Menace, and a variety of symbols and emblems, and finally *La Bataille*, an army of good angels. At the angles of the room are four pairs of caryatides, hideous and grotesque monsters, each pair supporting a statuette, the first a priest raising the Host, the second, a man praying, the third, a priest pronouncing absolution, the fourth, a Christian preacher.

This old room, full of bits of carved wood, with its mingled oddity and conventionality, half whimsically original, half childish, would be scarce worth the pains to describe but for one thing—namely, that the bird that has made for itself this curious nest out of far-gathered odds and ends is *rara avis*: I mean that the Doctor is in his way a man of genius, has a real natural artistic gift, which he shows in the difficult and almost obsolete form of wood-carving. Wood-carving as a fine art has, I think, no recognised public existence now: certainly none in England. Yet there is a rage for costly house-decoration and furniture. Old carved cabinets, chairs, &c., will fetch any price. Should the art of high-class

wood-carving by good luck be revived it would afford the wealthy one of the most dignified and delightful means of embellishing their halls, chambers, staircases, doors, windows, cabinets, and so forth, and one really fine panel over a chimney would give character to a room. Such things done on seasoned wood would last for ever, and might easily be made removable. The Art of wood-carving, with its power of using any required degree of relief, as well as of producing complete figures, large or small, at home in the purely decorative, while capable of expressing lofty and subtle truths of expression and feeling, would be an Art worth reviving; and the discovery of many things and the revival of many may be traced to some obscure and ridiculed enthusiast.

One may hold Art to be a true and priceless enrichment and enhancement of life, and at the same time utterly reject and abhor the modish Artistic Atheism—a dainty despair, which tells us that since we are all walking into the black gulf of Eternal Death our resource should be to embellish this background with fireworks, the best and most we can get up—have as many artistic sensations as possible within a given time.

The pretty Norman sea-coast fields, and ferny, gorsy commons, and sloping woods, are almost as like as twins to those of Hampshire or Devon. The French country is rather rougher, and there are no trim parks or pales. One day we drove to the lighthouse of Fatouville, where an ascent to the lantern (after admiring the gruff, deaf light-keeper's rose-garden below) gave us a wide view over the estuary of the Seine; Havre, opposite, to the left, with its long sea-wall and backing of forts; and Harfleur a little further up, in its river-side valley, sentinelled by one tall, thin central tower and spire. The inland region from this height looked like an expanse of coppice or scrub land. On

our way we went into a very ancient little roadside church, possibly of Duke William's time, at Roquefleur. Service is still done there, and the altars of Saint Gorgon and other holy ones stood duly dressed, but the old tiled roof seemed shaky enough to come down at any louder chant or sermon than usual. There was the usual box 'for the restoration of the building': but, alas, one knows what that too usually means. A sensible clergyman and an honest village carpenter could often 'restore' in a case of this kind at a trifling cost, where the famous architect and his contractors would destroy everything valuable and reverend, at a huge expense. In the weedy little churchyard, full of upright crosses, lay in one corner an antique stone coffin not long disinterred.

Another day we drove to the village of Touques, and a mile or two further to the ruins of the priory of St. Arnault, on the slope of a hill among tall ash trees, beneath the roots of one of which gushed out the clear water of a Holy Well. A small part of the ruins is still roofed, and used occasionally for service, and under this is a crypt, to which one descends by a dim-lit, narrow stone stair. You come to a low arch and look down into the subterranean chamber, attainable by a second short flight of steps. The old man, guardian of the place, encourages you, speaking from behind, 'There is nothing to fear, monsieur; they are very harmless—it is the living who are dangerous.' And peering down you perceive that that whitish mass of strange objects on the floor is a heap of human bones and skulls, whereon the light of a small gothic window-opening, fringed with ivy, falls with a ghastly picturesqueness amid the shadows of the vault.

Restored to daylight, we mounted further up the beautiful broad grassy hill, which shows us on one hand the buildings of gay Trouville a few miles off, and the sea; and on the other hand, a vast expanse of rich woodland, sloping gradually from the valley of the river Touques. And if we lately

saw the sad and silent relics of many human beings, here are fragments, a bone or two as it were, of the skeleton of a House once alive and merry, now dead. Its age is nothing to that of its neighbour the Castle of Bonneville or many another; but its nearness to our time makes it nearer to one's sympathy, at least to mine. Count Médaillon, Marquis of Lassay, dared to love Mademoiselle de Montpensier, cousin of King Lewis the Fourteenth. One day, she happened to express a wish to see Normandy, he hastily uttered and heartily urged an invitation for her and a noble company to his estate there, which was accepted. Estate in Normandy he had and wealth, but no house, or only a small one wholly unfit to entertain such guests. Therefore, hastening back to his manor of Lassay, on this hill of wide prospect over sea and land, he caused to be built in three months (let us suppose the materials ready and waiting) a stately château of hewn stone, with fair chambers and all rich furnishing, wherein he duly received this noble company, and above all *la grande Demoiselle*. On seeing the house and its surrounding prospects the Princess is said to have exclaimed, 'What a place to live in with the man of one's choice!' But the man of her choice, after all, was not De Lassay, but Lauzan. Him she secretly married (being, we must add for truth's sake, five-and-forty,) and then the King, after the pleasant fashion of the time, threw her husband into prison and kept him there ten years.

The Marquis of Lassay, for his part, afterwards married a fair wife, Julie Châteaubriand by name, and lived to be eighty-six. His successor, Comte de Lauragnais, who inherited by his mother's side, gave many splendid fêtes here, some of them specially for The Dubarry—one of those ladies who can claim the honour of the definite article.

Only the central part of the château remains, both wings being razed to the ground, and this remnant is of fine cut stone. The ground-floor is now a byre for cows. We passed

up the grand staircase and further up to the roof: not wholly a safe exploit, for the stairs and beams that remain are rotting away, the roof is shattered, and here and there a great square stone hangs out from the wall, as if a finger push would send it crashing down through everything. It seemed very odd that someone had not thought of repairing all this, before things were so far gone, but evidently no attempt has been made to stay the process of destruction. The new look of the stonework, which might have come yesterday from the mason's hand, adds to the pathos of the deserted mansion, that stood finished so proud and gay one bygone summer on its panoramic hilltop.

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan ?

Then we crossed the valley and entered the wide circuit of shattered walls, ruins of the castle of Bonneville, a stronghold of the mighty Duke William, whose fame, after eight hundred years, is still alive over all this land—the courtyard now grass and garden-ground with a farm-house in one corner, the broken walls and towers covered with ferns and flowering bushes, and on the circling slopes of the deep moat, long since dry, apple trees loaded with fruit stooping from either side. We saw vacant chambers in the massive wall, winding stairs, narrow windows, a deep well in one turret, in another an *oubliette*, into whose utterly dark gulf a string with a candle was lowered, until it rested on the damp floor some eighty feet below. A row of strong iron handles clamped into the wall gave means to descend,—to find out, say, if the tenant of this Cave of Forgetfulness, chained below, were yet living, or to fasten his corpse to the hoisting rope. Elsewhere was a prison in the thickness of the wall, with no light, only some air-holes.

Often, from this platform where we stand, the great Duke, recking nothing of Forgotten Prisoners, looked inward on the swarm of steel-clad men in the broad courtyard, or out upon his thick-woody ducal domains and hunting ground,

thinking at times, mayhap, if Touques river down there would be fit place to muster a fleet for England, or if Dives were better. By some accounts it was in this castle that the great English Earl swore his famous oath on the hidden relics; by others it was at Bayeux.

In truth, of all the incidents of Harold's visit to William only a dim and confused record remains, though the visit itself is indubitable, and the oath alleged by Norman writers is not denied by any English one. It appears clear that Harold was shipwrecked some time in the autumn season—year uncertain, possibly 1064—on the coast of Ponthieu (near the river Somme), and was made prisoner, with his followers (having no lawful business there, and travelling for pleasure not being a recognized practice), by Guy, lord of that country. Chivalry and brigandage were strangely mingled in those feudal times. One or more Englishmen escaping carried word to Duke William at Rouen, who ordered Guy, being his vassal, to release Harold and his men, the Duke himself paying their ransom. Then was Harold received at the Duke's court a highly honoured guest, and William having at that time on hand an expedition against the Bretons, led by Conan, Harold went with him as brother-in-arms. The Norman force, marching west, halted at Mont-Saint-Michel, and there crossing the march of Brittany raised the siege of Dol, which, though a Breton city, was held against Conan by a partisan of William's. Then William and Harold assaulted and took Dinan; and it was, most probably, after this successful expedition had returned to Normandy, that Harold publicly swore an oath to William, promising—we know not what: but doubtless, in some way acknowledging William as his superior. He also, it is said, engaged himself to marry one of William's daughters (though himself William's senior by a few years), when the young lady should be old enough for wifehood.

And so Earl Harold returned home: fated to be chosen

King about a year later at mid-winter time, and to be slain on an evening of the next autumn by Norman arrow on the bloody hill of Senlac, the quondam brothers-in-arms there hurled against each other in furious shock, and England's Crown for prize of the victor.

Driving back through the forest of Touques, a long straight road, bordered with endless fir trees and young oaks, we had a small adventure. We overtook a large empty cart drawn by two horses, and carrying two men, who were shouting out a very drunken song about 'chasing the Prussians out of France.' We had no sooner passed them than it came into their heads to give us chase, perhaps dramatising us into Prussians. They flogged the great horses into a gallop, and came clattering and yelling after us. Artus touched up our steady old white steed (the favourite horse-colour in Normandy, perhaps in honour of the Virgin, who is specially venerated here). We were five in number, including two ladies, but *le cheval blanc* did his part well, while the drunken waggon swayed about, swerved on the road-side grass, and could not keep up the pace. We drew away, and Artus, with a sigh of relief, said those fellows might have knocked us *au diable* if they had come up. Those two citizens ought certainly to have lost their votes for the next election; but some less refined penalty would also have been highly proper.

From the rustic *auberge* on the *Côte de Grâce* I travelled ten miles by *diligence*, and found myself for a change installed in a vast fashionable hotel in Trouville. This, 'tis well known is no longer a hole of a place, if the name ever carried that significance. It is Paris by the sea, and Paris, as might be expected, has nicely boarded a mile or so of the ocean-beach, that its crowd of *bottes vernis* and, above all, *bottines*, may promenade there entirely at their ease.

The bathing scenes are comical beyond belief. There are

friendly parties of both sexes running into the sea hand-in-hand, and plunging about in a wild aquatic dance : there are ladies young and not so young, tall and short, slim and fat, in every variety of bathing costume, usually starting from the common basis of cap, tunic and loose trousers, with arms and legs bare. There are the bathing-men, sturdy amphibii who are all day long catching ladies' hands and running out with them into the waves, or else carrying fair burdens bodily and dipping them in the salt flood after the manner which we all associate with our early childhood. Observe that rather stout lady in loose attire, her plump white feet dimpling the tawny sand as she issues from her dressing cabinet to the crowded beach. There are two ropes some twenty or thirty yards apart, running down to the sea at this place, to prevent the fair bathers from being actually jostled by promenaders ; but it is quite in order to stand at the rope and stare with eye or eyeglass, as one does at the rail of Rotten Row. So, under the full gaze of a row of dandies and loungers, comes our plump lady footing it featly over the yellow sand. A tall, whiskered bathing-man, in dark costume, approaches. He places himself by the lady's side and stoops a little. She throws her arms tightly around his neck, and next moment finds herself swung off the ground and being carried *à la Paul et Virginie*, into the rippling waves, among a host of other mermaids, where she is duly dipped. By-and-by she is carried shorewards in the same fashion. Some young ladies, on a bright day, are in no particular hurry to return to their dressing cabinets, but promenade awhile in a state of moist picturesqueness. All this gives much amusement to the fashionable crowds that lounge up and down all day long, and many pictures to the comic papers. The resort every evening (especially Sundays) is the huge Casino, blazing with gas-light ; with its juvenile ball of highly dressed children at an early hour, and its grown-up ball later, and its concert, and its mild gaming-

table—‘game of the race,’ single stake one franc. For the rest there are costly hotels and shops, decorated villas, carriages and liveries, saddle-horses and donkeys, and the latest Paris fashions. There is also an honest little commercial port—well, stay a moment, safer to say a *busy* little commercial port, with a long pier.

Trouville, it is said, was ‘invented’ by Alexander Dumas the elder, by means of his novel called *Pauline*, a highly sensational narrative. The heroine is imprisoned by ruffians in the crypt of a ruined abbey in this part of Normandy. Her lover, by great good luck, comes to the very spot, releases her and carries her off to England. The steamer lands them at Brighton, whence they proceed to London and bury themselves in the seclusion of a small cottage situated in Piccadilly. For the rest I must refer you to the original.

A Frenchman here asked us if Trouville was not very like Brighton. It is but a village to Brighton, but the latter place might take a lesson from it, and beautify its long drab and whitish terraces with window-flowers and gay Venetian shutters.

Deauville, the would-be rival of Trouville, was the invention of another great man of our time, the Count, afterwards Duke, de Morny, right-hand-man of the Third Napoleon. While Trouville became the pink of fashion, the sandhills on the west side of the river Touques remained, De Morny was sorry to observe, in the undisputed possession of rabbits and sea-gulls, although the site was equally ‘eligible.’ The Duke bought these sandhills in the lump for a small sum, and on looking more closely at his purchase and getting it examined by surveyors, architects, medical men, and analytical chemists, was delighted to find it even much more eligible than he had hoped,—in fact, far superior to Trouville,—better soil, better air, better sea, better everything except houses, and those could speedily be supplied. Some showy houses were built, prospectuses issued, sites sold, a

rival casino erected, and the new bathing-town of Deauville took its place in geography and fashionable intelligence. Then de Morny played out his trumps—the Emperor, Empress, and Prince Imperial chose Deauville one summer for their residence. More villas were built; the remaining sandhills went up in the market, as if the neighbouring river were Pactolus instead of Touques. A stone monument facing the sea was begun to the noble and generous originator of all this rapid prosperity, who had himself (and why not?) pocketed a very large sum of money.

But now it was suddenly discovered that the brilliancy of Deauville was like that of a bunch of cut flowers. There was no root to its flourishing glories. The Imperial Court returned no more; the place was found dull and inconvenient; the fine villas lay many of them untenanted; and at the present moment the visitor may read on the basis (the only part that was built) of the intended monument, ‘*La Ville de Deauville Reconnaisante*,’—but alas! the name of Duke de Morny, to whom the town was so grateful, has been obliterated. If the French nation could only rub out facts and consequences as readily as they rub out names!

All through the reign of their Sham-Napoleon what a set of men have held the foremost places in France, from Saint-Arnaud, De Morny, Persigny, his early complotters, to Ollivier of the light heart, Lebœuf who was ‘ready to a button, to a strap,’ Benedetti the diplomatist of Ems, and Bazaine the hero of Metz! You may rub names off your street-corners and milestones, O French People, but you cannot rub out that disgraceful twenty years of your history. You must repent in sackcloth and ashes, though not by way of pilgrimages to Mont-Saint-Michel or Paray-le-Monial. These black-robed guides, also, recollect, were false guides, were the very men who made Sham-Napoleon possible, with his De Morny, Lebœuf, Margaret Bellenger, millinery Empress, and all the rest of them.

But the Emperor did so much for the nation in practical matters: such trade and commerce, such prosperity! Well, if you are willing to set off this kind of profit against spiritual bankruptcy, you must first consider what the sum-total of

France in account with a Sham-Napoleon

is likely to be. Some heavy items have come in of late years on the wrong side, and the reckoning is not closed—far from it.

What tremendous force must have lived in that Corsican Evil Genius, when, a whole generation after his death in duration and disgrace, the mere name—*nominis umbra*—is able to clutch France once again, once again fling her bleeding into the mire with a worse downfall than ever! And now we are promised a Napoleon the Fourth, and shall have him perhaps when the warming-pan has done its part, and if the military and money-lending interests can agree in a new plot. This last-named power is the true modern arbiter of peace and war, the stablisher and changer of rulers and dynasties.

An anecdote: which comes from no bad private authority. When Paris was besieged, one Anthony Rothschild, a gentleman in the banking line, owned a country house and park in the vicinity, on which the Germans made the usual military requisitions towards the support of their troops, but without result. Therefore Anthony, who was somewhere well out of range, received an official letter: ‘Must pay up requisitions, or it will be necessary to occupy your house as a barrack, cut down your trees,’ and so forth. In due course of post comes the reply, addressed to Herr von Bismarck himself, enclosing a copy of military letter: ‘The high-born, most respected Herr will see it is written under a misconception, and needs full retraction and apology. Should these by any accident not be forthcoming, has the

honour to observe that the Bank of Prussia must suspend payment within seven days from the present date.' The country house was not made into a barrack, and the Bank of Prussia went on as usual. The Herr himself with his staff, after due negotiation, occupied the house for a time, behaving with a scrupulosity which much surprised even his Private Secretary, who was not aware of the peculiar nature of the case.

From Trouville-Deauville we drove by the coast-road through Villerville, Houlgate, new and raw little bathing towns with scattered villas and wide sandy roads, to Cabourg, a dull hamlet with a great Hôtel de la Plage and Casino, sea-terrace in front and tamarisk hedges and flower beds behind. The long perspective of the *table-d'hôte* was thinly peopled at one end; and as we walked after dark on the terrace, a few stars twinkling over the dusky ocean, the Casino windows blazed and lively dance music sounded; but looking in, we saw the poor fiddlers working away on the platform to a vast empty room—no, there were two people present, subscribers doubtless, one in a window seat, the other moodily stretched on a sofa. And still the fiddlers fiddled polka and waltz and quadrille, but nobody came. It was the swan-song of the season; and this was the last seaside Casino we found open in our travels. Those, by the way, who prefer to do their sea side in high-heeled boots had better go at once to Trouville itself, of which the other places are but poor imitations.

RAMBLE THE NINETEENTH.

FROM CABOURG TO ST. MALO.

[1873.]

FROM the hotel of Cabourg I walked a mile and a half to the quaint little town of Dives, with its picturesque old *Guillaume le Conquérant* inn (balconies hung with clematis, wide low rooms and carved oak furniture), its market house a huge sloping roof supported on open pillars, and its great gray church of many towers and turrets, magnificently venerable. But the hand of the 'restaurateur' (architectural cook) is stealthily laying hold upon it. Some old parts of the edifice stood here when William's fleet and army waited in and around Dives harbour (now choked with sand) for a fair wind to carry them to the south coast of England, where for his part Earl Harold had ready a much greater fleet and army to receive them. But the wind blew adverse day after day, when it blew at all; Harold's Englishmen finding nobody coming, scattered to their urgent harvest work; then came the sudden appearance of Norse invaders in Lincolnshire, guided by King Harold's own brother Tostig; against whom King Harold rushing northward, violently overthrew and destroyed their whole strength in the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Meanwhile William had moved his fleet and army along the coast to the mouth of the Somme; the wind blew fair at last; and King Harold had scarce taken breath after the great fight of Stamford, when a mes-

senger brought him tidings of the Norman host under their mighty Duke already encamped in Sussex. We must admit either luck or Providence in human affairs, after men have done all they can.

Inside the Church of Dives has lately been inscribed over the west door a list of the chief followers of William in his grand Expedition, including many a name familiar and friendly to our ears, though once those of the deadly enemies of England.

A carriage from the Cabourg hotel—driven by a Red Republican, as he informed us by the way—carried us to Caen, over a road at first flat and ugly, passing now a row of tall ungainly clipt trees, now a desolate-looking château in its weedy park, now a slovenly hamlet of gray stone. But after a time we descended into a fine wooded valley, with a great showy new mansion among the trees, came on a broad curve of the river Orne, poplar-guarded, and saw, amid a bosky plain, towers and spires not unlike those of Oxford. Then we got into suburbs, and a hideous sprawl of railway and canal works, and so rattled up the tall, narrow, dirty Rue St. Jean of the famous old Norman city, and into the court-yard of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, a somewhat dark and dingy house. But it afforded the cardinal comfort in travelling, a tolerable bedroom—whose tall window gave prospect of many gray gables and roofs, with the towers of an old church in the distance, Queen Matilda's *Abbaye aux Dames*. I found all French beds clean (the entomology of my travels amounted to one solitary flea), and the carpetless floors and big hinged windows pleasant in the summer time, but the washing arrangements usually defective, and some other accommodations marvellous bad.

Rain, mud, and evil smells; tall old crooked, rough-paven streets; huge and rich Gothic towers; a commercial port on the Orne, full of coasting vessels; three great deserted and desecrated churches, one a granary for the cavalry, one

(with flamboyant windows) a coach and lumber house, the third (with great Norman arches and grotesque pillar-capitals) a public corn-market; William's grand Abbey at one end of the city, on low ground, and Matilda's at the other on a hill: such are my chief recollections of Caen, made more compact by a general view from a church-roof, showing the crowd of rugged house-tops and carven spires encompassed by their dark-green plain. The sea, some eight miles away, is shut out by that long low ridge to the north.

William's Abbey is one of the most majestic and beautiful of churches; the nave Norman throughout in style, though only a portion is of the great Duke's building. He founded that before setting out on his perilous expedition to England, with vows and prayers to Saint Stephen and the Heavenly Hierarchy, but it was not completed till eleven years later. A large flagstone in the centre of the choir marks the grave of 'Invictissimus Guillelmus Conquestor,' the Acquirer—for such is the true significance of the epithet; and here was transacted the strangely dramatic and horrible scene of the great king's funeral. The tomb has long been empty: not a bone remains of that son of Anak.

Next day we saw his birthplace, Falaise, 'The Cliff,' old town amid forest land sloping up to the huge gray ruinous castle on its crag-edge, from which you look over tree-tops to the rocky headland opposite, and down into a forked ravine where to this day a group of tanneries give work to the little stream flowing by, as they did eight hundred years ago, when Fulbert the tanner's beautiful daughter caught the eyes of young Duke Robert. From one turret-window you look almost straight down on the roofs and tanpits, and I believe a lover's eye, if no other, might possibly have discerned the stately Arletta (a corruption of the Danish name Herleva) at her father's door. But the Duke, who was a boy of eighteen or less, first noticed her (I prefer to believe, as one story goes) as he returned from hunting, washing linen in the

brook with other merry maids. One day not long after, a trusty knight came down to the tanneries with most important message; and after much dubitation, we may conceive, but urged by ambition, policy and fear (for his liege-lord and close neighbour would have been a terrible enemy) Fulbert sent his beautiful daughter to the Castle,—most probably not *this* Castle, however, in spite of guide-books and inscriptions, but an older one on the same rock.

She was never a wife, but she never had a rival in her young Duke's affections, and when he set forth on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to gain the forgiveness of his sins, he presented to the Norman nobles the seven-year-old Willelmus Bastardus as his heir, and they all swore fidelity to the boy, placing one by one their big hands between his little palms.

Duke Robert died on his pilgrimage, having lived but twenty-five years and some months, and there was faint likelihood that his little William should ever rule the turbulent Duchy of Normandy. But the boy's guardians were firm in their trust; he waxed strong, grew skilful in arms and horsemanship, and fulfilled his fierce and dramatic part in the world's history; from his birth among these crags and woods, in the year 1027 or 8, to his fatal saddle-bruise at the burning of Mantes, and his death-bed (pillaged and deserted as the last breath was drawn) in the ancient priory of St. Gervase at Rouen in 1087. Prologue: the wooing of the tanner's daughter, fair Herleva, by Duke Robert. Epilogue: the solemn protest of Ascelin against the burial of the body of the great King and Duke William in Caen church of his own founding; 'for,' said the knight, 'this man was a robber, and took the ground we stand on by force from my father,'—and the physical horrors of the sepulture.

Very little is known of the Mother of our Kings,—and how lightly we reckon 'the spindle-side' in our ancestries! She was a beautiful girl, most likely of large Scandinavian mould. The notion that the French form of her name was

made a term of opprobrium in the English language is groundless; and were the etymology true it would be odiously unjust to Arletta's memory. But it is certain that William's illegitimacy was often thrown in his face. Why Robert did not marry her, before setting out in quest of pardon, is a puzzling question.

Later, she was married to Herlwin of Conteville, and bore two sons, Odo (who grew to be the terrible fighting Bishop of Bayeux) and Robert, and a daughter Muriel. The great William always honoured his mother, and held to all his relations on her side.

A spirited equestrian bronze statue of the Conquestor, set up some twenty years ago, dominates the Place de la Trinité at Falaise.

Our next halting-place was Le Mans, head-quarters for a time of Prince Frederick Charles during the war, the slow railway journey being somewhat enlivened by the conversation of a pleasant mannered and intelligent young *Curé*, who said frankly, the French clergy are now all of one accord, all tramontane, all wishing and working for *Henri Cinq*. No attack on Italy was dreamed of, or on Germany — 'it would not be possible:' the want of France is peace and order under her legitimate king. But the Church, I objected with equal frankness, when powerful, is always intolerant and aggressive. 'O, by no means, monsieur' — and of course we could not agree on that point.

The city of Le Mans, which, like Caen, is a place of uncomfortable size neither large nor small, occupies several moderate hills. It seemed a dull ugly town, and at night the ill-paved and ill-lighted streets were dismal. The officers of the large cavalry garrison must be sometimes hard put to it for an evening's amusement, in spite of cigars and absinthe, cards and billiards, and the frowsy delights of a *café chantant*. There are, however, many picturesque old houses and nooks in Le Mans, had we had time for them. Hasty travelling

is neither useful nor pleasant,—to be always in a flutter, never able to reap ‘the harvest of a quiet eye.’ When alone, and not pressed for time, I stay at any place that is of note, or strikes me, till I feel that I have got some hold of it. The effect is still better if one can revise one’s first impressions. If I could have walked in, out, and about Le Mans, loitered in the large market-place under the cathedral steps, and visited again and deliberately that lofty building, whose many buttressed choir is one of the jewels of later Gothic, I should have now a picture added to memory’s gallery, instead of a rough confused bit of sketch not worth framing.

At Laval it was not so bad ; the town being smaller, and we had two days, the first for seeing, the second for revision. The church here, though large and old, is not beautiful ; yet it pleased me well to wander round it by narrow old alleys of Doresque nodding wooden houses, and out on a little green, like an English close on a small scale, and back again through a massive gateway, with bushes and weeds rooted in its groinings and buttresses. I am often more touched by the spirit of the Past in coming upon some bit of sleepy old mottled wall, like this gable of the Church, with its little window that seems going blind with age, than when I look on the magnificence of carved towers and flying buttresses. So in history it is mostly the little personal interests that touch me, not the great events. The idea of the Bygone, the idea of Human life, are in themselves so entrancing and pathetic, that the mere suggestion of them fills the mind with thought and emotion. The pomp of History and of Architecture introduces a theatric sort of pleasure.

I mounted to the roof of the church, guided through dark webwork of beams and ladders by a polite clergyman, professor in the neighbouring college, with a good intelligent face, and looked out of various loopholes on the town and the river, and to the suburban church of Avenières, famous for its miracle-working statue of the Virgin. ‘Did the

German soldiers enter Laval?' I asked. 'No; they came within half a league, down those fields to the westward, but no farther, through the grace and help of Our Lady of Avenières. 'Did not their advanced guard or scouts come into the town?' 'Not a man—through the protection of Our Lady.' 'Very extraordinary,' I said, and so we passed to other topics, and I interested him by mentioning that the Keltic name 'Mac-Mahon' means 'Son of a Bear.'

The clergy are very busy all over France turning the late war to account for the rehabilitation of Catholicism. Everywhere one finds wayside crosses repaired, Calvaries repainted, shrines renewed, public notices of bishops' visits, special services, votive offerings. A showy engraving of the National Pilgrimage at Lourdes is in the shop windows, and a great Pilgrimage to Mont Saint Michel, to last a month, is now going on. The Count of Chambord was born on the Day of St. Michael the Archangel, a fact which is not absent from the clerical mind.

Laval is on the Mayenne, flowing north and south, a bright lively river about as big as the Exe at Exeter, bordered with wide, clean quays. From the railway station you come down a long broad road, bordered with houses to the bridge, crossing which you arrive at the market-place, a waterside boulevard, and the trim alleys of a public garden; and here, under shadow of the great old castle of the Seigneurs De la Tremouille, now a prison, rising on its rock behind, we found a *Fête* or Pleasure-Fair going on, rows upon rows of booths for eatables, wearables, ornaments, toys, books, rosaries, and what not, two circuses, and a great many shows, peep-shows, shooting-galleries (at which a Prussian soldier was the favourite target), merry-go-rounds, and wheels of fortune, round which swarmed and eddied the crowds of blouses, white caps, wooden-shod children with tight headgear, a very decent-looking and well-behaved rustic people. I saw nobody drunk; and, moreover, it

seemed that the characteristic faces among the show-people, wheel-of-fortune men, and itinerant vendors were not of the blackguard and ruffianly type unfortunately so common in England, but of the careless, scampish kind, often with a touch of natural gaiety or oddity that marked them for true children of Bohemia.

An open-air Singer attracted me most. Something like him may be met in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, hardly in England. This melodist had 'local colour' in every particular of him. Lifted waist-high, by vantage of a stool, over the admiring crowd, the old fellow fiddled and sang, his droll, shrewd, ruddy face crowned with tow wig and cocked hat, his short stoutish figure dressed in tawdry laced coat; whilst planted beside him like a banner stood a huge old whitish umbrella or moveable tent, ready for unfurling against rain, with a paper pinned to it bearing the words, 'Chédru, Chanteur.' Grotesque and shabby as he was, he bore the sunlight well, and the promise of his good-humoured eyes and broad flexible mouth was not belied by the singing, which was always in tune, and well phrased. He attempted no vocal display, but brought out every line and note clearly and pleasantly, and expressed the intention of his song, words and music combined, without effort and to the satisfaction of ear and mind—surely the right sort of singing, and too seldom heard. At intervals M. Chédru took down fiddle from chin, and offered for sale some little books with the words of his songs, then giving out the number and title of his next ditty went on to sing it, while the purchasers followed the words in the book. One song was *Bacchus* :

O Bacchus ! dieu du vin,
Protège nos vendanges.
O Bacchus ! dieu du vin,
Protège le raisin.

The invocation was in place here in France with her

vineyards and her Latin kinship; in England 'twould have been alien and theatric. Another effusion ran thus :

Salut ! ma belle France,
Salut ! nous t'aimerons toujours :
A tous tu donnes des beaux jours,
Toi seule est nos amours,
Notre seule espérance.

Te croyant abattue
Déjà de jaloux ennemis
Disaient : Elle est vaineue :
C'est à nous tout ce grand pays.
Mais, grâce à la richesse
De nos produits et de nos travaux.
La France est sans faiblesse.
Les horizons sont nouveaux.
Salut, etc.

Then there was one rejoicing in 'The Return of Songs' after two years of war and misery, and celebrating Béranger, Victor Hugo, and other bards of a 'divine genius.' France, inspirited by her singers, will march on with head erect, and the stranger, seeing that she ever carries 'progress' with her, will at last own his fault. *Gloire à notre belle Patrie ! etc.*

After nightfall, in a *café*, I heard more singing, also good of its kind. Three strollers, a comic man and his wife, and a young woman about two-and-twenty, stood up alternately on a chair and sang, then went round with a tin dish, in which the applause of the company took a substantial form. The young woman, dark-eyed, dark-haired, with thin but healthy face and well-cut mouth and chin, had a peculiar incisive earnestness mingled with sweetness in her voice and look that remains distinct in my memory. It was that great charm, whether in art or manners, of strong emphasis without a tinge of vulgarity. She first, I think, sang a military song, and then one with the burden :

Lafontaine, et Montaigne, et Molière, et Rabelais—
Voilà l'esprit Français !

Of which all the drinkers and smokers took up the chorus in good tune.

Certainly the French make much of their celebrated sons, authors included. Everybody recognises—be it with or without knowledge—and is proud of the famous names of their literature. The mass of the English people care not a dump for all their poets and writers ; and in all the Popular Song Books I do not remember anything of the cast of this *L'Esprit Français* or Chédru's *Retour des Chansons*.

From Laval, where few English travellers stop a night—yet the Hôtel de France is a house pleasant and comfortable beyond the average—we went to Vitré, and I felt a thrill in being veritably within the bounds of the antique land of Brittany. Yet the frontier line is almost forgotten now. Guide-books and Frenchmen make mistakes about it, and the usual maps only give the modern legal divisions. The months of the year soon recovered themselves from revolutionary assault, but not the old geography of France.

Here I saw, though the day was warm, many men in the market-place wearing loose goatskin coats, parti-coloured some of them with hereditary patches ; but I could not hear one word of Breton spoken, nor at Vitré or St. Malo or Dinan find a single Breton book or pamphlet for sale. On this side of Brittany the old fashions are much faded away ; not like Wales, where we can step over the English border into full Kymry.

We dined at the Hôtel de Sévigné, once a family mansion of the Sévignés, with delightfully proportioned big rooms and wide staircase. Sooth to say, it was slatternly in some particulars, and we agreed to push on to sleep at Rennes, although a bedroom which we afterwards had a chance to peep into looked satisfactory enough.

At Vitré—which, with its swarm of gray stone and gray

slated houses round the huge ruined Castle, is delightfully picturesque—we drove out some three miles to M^{de}. de Sévigné's château, *Les Rochers*, a fine old turreted mansion, on its plateau among woods, with a large formal garden ; but admittance was refused, and all we saw of the chamber in which so many of the famous Letters were written was the outside of its window, some thirty feet from the ground, looking across a sloping orchard to a wooded hill.

At Rennes we put up at the St. Julien, an excellent house, the best I saw in my tour. Great part of the city of Rennes was burnt in 1720, and the capital of Brittany has few ancient buildings to show, none of importance. It has long streets and broad places of dull, regular, lofty houses, like a piece of Paris without its bustle. At nine in the evening every place is shut up except a *café* or two. The town-hall is a large French Renaissance building ; and the Cathedral, built by decree of the French Napoleon, is in the style of our St. Paul's, but without a dome. Inside they are doing it up with great completeness, and the effect in its way is as striking as paint, gilding and fresco could well produce there. It is hard at first to believe that these great pillars are not real yellow marble, and these panels black marble, but the Caen stone has only been coated with some sort of improved plaster-work, and top-coated with paint and varnish. The apse, which was finished, certainly looked sumptuous, and, in spite of the lavish use of colour, harmonious ; it will answer its purpose of ceremonial pomp till the sham-marble begin to crack and peel.

The most amusing sight I saw at Rennes was a multitude of washer-women, not all together, but in successive groups, at work on the canal bank next morning, where a poplared walk on the other side gave a full view of their operations, each group consisting of twenty or thirty bare-armed women, some kneeling in things like a brick-layer's hod, dipping the clothes into the slow-flowing clean

canal, fringed with grass and water lilies, and thumping them with a wooden bat; others wringing, others hanging the wet wearables on lines among the apple-trees. It must be owned that there was little youth or comeliness among these professional *blanchisseuses*, and their working-rig was severely practical, the majority wearing old patched jackets and petticoats, here a faded kerchief tied over head, there a nightcap, or a ragged straw hat, while some looked as withered and wild in their attire as the Scotch witches. Yet there were pretty girls too, and the whole scene was bustling, picturesque, and agreeable, or rather succession of scenes, for as the canal or watercourse opened one tree-reflecting bend and creek after another, one chatting cluster after another of busy washerwomen appeared (certainly they were to be reckoned by hundreds) till the repetition itself became a joke. This useful and next to godly work carried on as in those ancient days of Nausikaa and her maidens, sociably in open air and living water, is a pleasant feature of French life.

At Rennes I took leave of my companions and went on alone to Dol, which ancient and famous city is now but a rude village. To venture out after nightfall is a feat not to be lightly attempted, as there are no sidewalks, no lamps, after an early hour no shops open, and the street is paved with rough uneven stones. By daylight there is matter for the sketcher in the little old gray houses resting on short stone pillars, and the large dim old thirteenth-century church in its grass-grown precinct among garden walls. *La Grande Maison* is not a grand but a quaint and homely, comfortable old inn, its front resting on pillars forming a porch with seats, from which you pass into the kitchen, where the landlady, a jolly Breton widow, and her daughter, a comely Breton lass, and the servants, sit and bustle about and take their meals. There is a large garden partly walled by the old town fortifications, and in this garden stands a small

house with supplementary bedrooms, one of which I occupied and looked out with pleasure on the vine leaves and clusters and the apple-trees, some loaded, some with heaps of red and yellow fruit lying beneath for the cider-press.

North of Dol (which signifies a turn, winding, river-meadow, dale), a plain stretches to the bay, one rocky hill rising amid the level, the far-seen Mont Dol, crowned with its chapel and three windmills, and a little stream loses its way among the sea-embankments.

Two miles to the eastward of the town stands a notable *menhir*, in English, 'Long Stone,' to which I walked by highway and farm road, finding it in a lonely field of just-cut sarrasin ('buck-wheat'), and to my surprise without any beaten track leading to so famous a curiosity. It looked satisfactorily big and old, a mass of dark gray granite shaped like a mower's hone, rising some thirty feet above the ground. My French Guide-Book had told of a large wooden crucifix on the pagan head of this monument, adding, 'Les croix et les calvaires sont certainement de bonnes choses, mais pas trop n'en faut.' As I crossed the field of the *menhir*, there stood the dark old stone, but nothing a-top, and coming closer I found the crucifix with its suffering figure lying dishonoured among the wet stubble. What this meant I did not find out. The *blé sarrasin* ('Saracen wheat,' brought in it is said by the Crusaders) with its light-red stalks and flowers is a feature in the rural landscapes here. It is no wheat at all, but carries a pannicked head with a small hard black seed, shaped like a beech-nut. Hence the German name *Buchweizen*, 'beech-wheat,' which we have corrupted into buck-wheat. Here it is used mainly to feed cattle; but in America a favourite breakfast-cake is made of it.

The day had cleared up when our *diligence* started for Pontorson, a conveyance that looked almost as old-world as the *menhir*, a mountain of rusty leather and iron, with rope

traces, the inside horribly crammed with six wretched human beings, the outside as hard to climb to as a ship's cradle. The worst London omnibus would have been luxury to it. It is another of the curious points of difference between French and English people, that the former are so slovenly in their vehicles and horse gear, the latter so careful and trim. Moreover the French rule of the road is the contrary of ours, which must puzzle coachmen when transferred from one country to the other. Monsieur keeps to the right hand; and so, oddly enough, does Brother Jonathan. In this matter, Germany and Belgium are at one with France, Italy with England; while Switzerland is divided. It seems most likely that the French rule came from driving with a postilion. He sits on the left-hand horse, his whip-hand extending over the other, and naturally allows anything meeting him to pass on the side next him, namely his left, where he can see his exact distance. The English coachman, driving from the right corner of the box, to keep his whip free, equally desires those who meet him to pass on his right hand, where he can see them best, and his own wheel too. It were better, surely, if all civilised whips were now agreed. The French, with all their organising turn, seem to have no fixed usage in Paris or elsewhere like the London one of keeping to the right in walking. Their only rule is *place aux dames*, who always take the wall; but the rule of keeping to one hand is, on the whole, of advantage to both sexes. French waiters, too, are not always careful to serve you on the left side at meals. Moreover salt-spoons are still far from universal, and you are expected to use the same plate for cheese and for fruit. On the other hand, the napkin never fails, and the dining-room, so often sepulchral in England, is made as gay and pleasant as possible.

But here is Pontorson, a dull village built along the roadside, with a grim old granite church, part Norman; and we

change into a smaller coach, and presently begin to wallow in deep mud, which threatens now and again to swallow us bodily. After some miles of this we emerge on the sand of Saint Michael's Bay, the tide being out, and the famous Mount stands up confessed, a pyramid of rocks, buttresses, battlements, roofs and pinnacles, close-girt within its turreted mediæval wall. Round it and beyond it stretch the tawny sands seamed with water-courses, and the river Coesnon, boundary of Normandy and Brittany, meandering in the midst, and running into the sea to the west of the Mount, according to the old saying :

Le Coesnon, dans sa folie,
Mit le Mont en Normandie.

Here and there a fisherman, net on shoulder, dots the wide expanse, and a straggling black line of vehicles and pedestrians creeps towards the distant gate of the Archangel.

The track is obliterated by each tide, and the sands shift to and fro, so that it asks wary travelling. Duke William and Earl Harold, on their march into Brittany, halted at Mont St. Michel. In crossing the sands, certain of the soldiers sank in a soft place, and one incident in the Bayeux Tapestry is Harold rescuing some of them with his own hands, a feat which must have been much talked of. '*Hic Harold, trahebat eos de arenâ.*' He is pictured carrying one man on his shoulders, and dragging up another by the wrist. Not long ago a heavy carriage stuck fast near the gate, the horses were taken out, and the vehicle gradually disappeared towards the centre of the earth, and is now as much lost as the chariot of Pharaoh. What a multitude of things must have sunk into these sands in the thousand years (not to go farther back) since Aubert, Bishop of Avranches, founded here his Benedictine monastery !

Up through the old gateway crawls our coach, then

slantingly through a second gateway, beside which stand two rusty cannons, captured from the men of English Harry when they vainly besieged the Mount in 1424. In the mouth of one lies a stone ball such as it used to project. Then through a third gateway, and we stop at the *Lion d'Or* in the rough crooked lane, steep as a stair, which goes winding up-hill, its houses hemmed in between ramparts and rock—the only street of the place. The inhabitants are fisher-folk: brown bare-legged men go by, net on shoulder; pails of water with live fish stand at doors, and netbags of cockles hang on the wall.

Climbing the lane, and then by a few steps to the ramparts, you look over to the broad sands, half embraced by the grove-darkened shores of Normandy and Brittany. At one angle these ramparts cling to a steep, rocky slope, green with ivy and a few wind-blown trees, and from this shoots up the great gray west-wall of *La Merveille*, 248 feet long by 108 feet in sheer height, built in the twelve hundreds. Of its huge halls piled one upon another, no part is now in use. The monks' refectory is below, whence by narrow stairs you ascend to the noble *Salle des Chevaliers* with its massive pillars and vaulted roof, and still higher to the beautiful four-square Cloister and its light pillared arcades. Here you are on a level with the crowning edifice of the Mount, the Convent Church itself, part Norman, part pointed Gothic, and climbing still farther, to its lofty summit (yet it is but 400 feet, they say, after all) among the crocketed pinnacles, you gain a marvellous prospect. Down plunges the eye among the close-packed mass of buildings within their encircling rampart, then flies like a bird over the broad sands, varied with countless effects of light and shadow, and the woody region beyond, or out to sea, and the faint islands of Chaussey; a lonely scene, save that there are two or three boats in the river; and, see, that straggling line of black dots—it is moving; a procession of ants; it is

the stream of Pilgrims who all this month of September 1873 make their way to the greatest shrine of the greatest of the Archangels, the chief high place of the Guardian of High Places.

From the church you can descend by a narrow stair in the wall into the dusky Crypt, whose huge round pillars sustain the upper edifice. It approaches a circular shape, and five small chapels radiate from the central part. In the middle stood a miraculous black statue of the Virgin, which was destroyed in 1793; but a new statue, perhaps equally miraculous, has lately taken the same place, the gift of a noble family. Several of the side-chapels still lack shrines, and, to encourage the faithful, Monsignor the Bishop of Coutances accords to the donor of an altar the privilege of dedicating it to the saint of his or her choice.

It was to the urgent and persevering pressure of this prelate that Louis Napoleon yielded in giving back Mont St. Michel, long used as a state prison, into the hands of Mother Church. The Church, Cloister, Hall of the Knights, and other parts, have been 'restored' under the directions of M. Viollet le Duc. The stonework being for the most part perfectly sound and firm, scarce any structural alterations have been made, but the pillars, groinings, &c., have as usual been *skinned*, and the charm of time-worn and time-mellowed surface carefully destroyed: all the joinings of the masonry, moreover, being filled in or 'pointed' with a hard white cement, so that you may count every separate stone. Thanks to this excellent device, the interior of the Church looks like a black and white plaid pattern, and the great pillars of the Knight's Hall have, as far as human ingenuity could do it, been robbed of their massive gracefulness. This picking out of the masonry with white lines is the usage of French restorers, and it is one of the simplest and surest ways of degrading the effect of any given piece of architecture.

The Mount was like an ant-hill with pilgrims and priests. It had been arranged that pilgrims from certain localities should arrive on certain days, to avoid overcrowding. On my first day we received the faithful of Dol and Avranches, twenty women to one man, throngs of broad-winged white caps and black stuff-gowns, rosary in hand, the cross of St. Michael pinned upon the breast. Often chanting hymns, and marshalled by one or more of the clergy, they kept passing up the steep street. It was an Epitome of Pilgrimage; the perilous sea sand, ancient gateways, rough and crooked ascent by narrow passages, and endless flights of steps between huge walls pierced with dungeon gratings; the gloomy crypts, mystic images, confessionals, lighted shrines; the floating chants, the strange distant glimpses of the world below, the ancient fane and religious awe. In a side chapel stood a glass-case containing relics of saints—a tooth, a finger-joint, a piece of sackcloth, and so forth, many of them authenticated by the Pontifical signature and seal.

I heard Mass and a discourse from the Bishop, his crozier meanwhile upheld by a strong black-visaged ecclesiastic, whose scowling face seemed to make credible all the theories of Eugène Sue and Mr. Whalley. From the incense smoke to open platform outside was a grateful relief: and thither came the Bishop, and stood greeting with friendly and quiet dignity those who approached him, while over the battlement leaned some young priests and pilgrims, vigorously chanting a hymn, and from the sands far beneath rose faint response uttered by a parting procession that slowly made for the mainland.

Next day Paris and Versailles arrived from Moidrey station on countless wheels: none of the *beau monde*, but plenty of the *bourgeoisie*, nor gay ribbons wanting, nor military heeled bootikins. Some wore the Sacred Heart, red stitched on white, in token of a visit to Sainte Marie Alacoque at Paray-le-Monial. Evening brought a religious *fête*.

Workmen with their usual carefulness of art treasures had all day been hammering nails into the joints of pillars, capitals, and masonry, to suspend Chinese lanterns from, and at nightfall these and all the shrines were lighted up.

We were just done dinner at the *Lion d'Or* (which managed well with its unusual crowds); when a sound of chanting approached, and looking out of window we saw a group of pilgrims, headed by two or three priests, halt at our door. They enquired if we could furnish *un chanteur*, but we could not, and they passed on to beat up for singing recruits elsewhere. A little later the grand procession itself appeared, numerous white-robed priests, choir boys in red, and then the host of white peasant caps, Parisian bonnets, and all varieties of male head-gear, trudging steadily (we with the rest) up the narrow lane up the stone steps, up to the great portal; and thence, headed by the Bishop of Coutances himself, Monsignor Mermillod, in mitre and crozier and muslin robe over purple silk, a tall venerable figure with thin gray hairs, and accompanied by an additional crowd of white clergy, the procession moved still upward within the precinct, everyone carrying a thin lighted taper about three feet in length, and chanting at the top of voice the Hymn to the Archangel, with many times repeated burden 'Saint Michel! Saint Michel!' (a strong emphasis on the last syllable). The multitude of lights climbing, zigzagging from one platform to another, throwing gleams and shadows on the architecture, the chant varying in strength as the leaders now turned a corner, now emerged from a portal, had a striking effect in the mere artistic view, and must have been deeply impressive to the devout. I thought to myself I had seldom filled a part so distinctly Protestant as now, marching taperless in company with a thousand tapers, silent among a thousand voices. But the Church managed to get the better of me. The thought had hardly crossed my mind when up came a polite ecclesiastic

with a bundle of unlighted tapers, and with a bow put one into my hand, my next neighbour immediately offered me a light, and there I was, 'counted in' as the Americans say, and so walked from shrine to shrine (keeping modestly in corners, however) along many galleries and up countless stairs, the chant of 'Saint Michel! Saint Michel!' continually ringing in my ears. It may not be uninteresting to quote some of this *Cantique Nouveau à St. Michel*. The refrain ran thus :

Saint Michel! Saint Michel! à votre puissance
 Nous venons demander l'appui des anciens jours.
 Qu'il monte jusqu'au Ciel, ce vieux cri de la France :
 Saint Michel! Saint Michel! à notre secours!

And here are some of the verses :

L'Enfer déchainé sur la terre,
 Redouble sa rage et ses coups ;
 Défendez-nous dans cette guerre,
 Contre lui combattez pour nous.
 Saint Michel, etc.

'Avec Dieu,' disent les impies,
 'Il faut en finir à jamais !'
 Ils blasphèment, dans leurs folies,
 Et sa puissance et ses bienfaits.
 Saint Michel, etc.

.
 Du Christ regardez le vicaire,
 Si grand, si ferme en ses revers !
 Et que votre bras tutélaire
 Le délivre et brise ses fers !
 Saint Michel, etc.

Infidèle à son divin Maître,
 Et marchant d'erreurs en erreurs,
 Notre France a vu disparaître
 Et son repos et ses grandeurs.
 Saint Michel, etc.

.
 Souvenez-vous que notre France,
 De l'Eglise fut le soutien,

Et qu'elle est eneor l'espérance
Du Pape et du monde chrétien.
Saint Michel, etc.

Pour Rome donc et pour la France,
Nous implorons votre secours.
Armez-vous pour leur délivrance ;
Sauvez-les ! gardez-les toujours !
Saint Michel, etc.

Yes, 'for Rome and for France,' that is the gist of the matter ; and necessarily for Henry the Fifth at the same time, whose birthday, none of us forget, is Saint Michael's own day, the twenty-ninth of September.

The procession marched, always glimmering with tapers, always chanting, through the great Hall of Knights, and other halls, hung with coloured lanterns of paper, and into the *Crypte de Gros-Piliers*, where they worshipped at the altar of its miraculous Virgin, and along the arcades of the Cloister, and at last into the lighted Basilica of the Archangel, where the tapers were extinguished, and a grand salutation of the master-altar performed.

An official pamphlet for the direction of the pilgrims was sold, containing the order of their movements and the special prayers and canticles. A list is given of the 'Indulgences accorded by our Holy Father Pope Pius IX. to those who perform the exercise of the Angelic Crown.' The Decree begins thus : 'It is a pious tradition of former times that the Archangel Saint Michael, Prince of the Celestial Militia, declared to a religious woman, who had been in the habit of honouring him every day by particular acts of devotion, that it would be agreeable to him to see introduced a special formula of prayers in his honour and in honour of all the Holy Angels of Heaven ; that he would recompense his devoted servants for this by hastening to their succour,' &c. &c. It further appears that the recipient of the message was a Carmelite nun of the convent of Vetralla, diocese of Viterbo,

who 'died in the odour of sanctity' in the year 1751. Hence originated the formula of prayers entitled *La Couronne Angélique*, and the Holy Father grants various Indulgences, which are stated, as distinctly as a table of insurance, to those who devoutly use the said formula, one being for a hundred days (for carrying it on the person, or kissing the medal attached), another for seven years, and seven times forty days (for reciting it); another, Plenary Indulgence once a month to anyone who has repeated daily the said 'Crown,' 'provided that, after confession and communion, he has prayed specially for the exaltation of our Mother the Holy Church, and for the conservation of the Sovereign Pontiff.' The book also contains a 'Triduum' in honour of Saint Michael, three prayers, in which it is declared that 'the rights of God are attacked with a fury almost beyond example: Satan, the enemy of the Most High and of men, utters with new fury, by the mouth of his numerous supporters, the cry of rebellious pride, *Non serviam!*' 'Remember once again, O Celestial Archangel, this France, on whose soil you have other time deigned to appear, and who, as eldest daughter of the spouse of Christ, has the distinguished privilege to possess in you the same protector as the Church her mother!' 'O Prince of the Celestial Militia, glorious Saint Michael! you surpass in glory all the immortal spirits, of whom you are the most perfect; you are the depositary of the Most High, the most near to His throne; you open and shut Heaven at His order, and you present us before His tribunal. If the dying address himself to you at the moment of death, you fly immediately to his aid, and make him feel your presence, you receive his soul, and convey it to the bosom of God.'

A comfort unspeakable! to believe that in the last dark hour a friendly Archangel will wait by your bed to conduct you into the Unknown Region. Catholicism holds, after all, an immensely strong position. Science or Morality, or both

together, can never fill its place for the generality of mankind. Human Life, with the deep mystery surrounding it, Catholicism interprets; peoples the blank darkness with wonderful places and beings; teaches all duties; ministers to the capacity of awe, penitence, adoration, spiritual hope and fear; supplies, in short, the religious nature of man with guidance and comfort. But what if the interpretation be false, the guidance based upon it misleading, the comfort delusive, the whole thing a Refuge of Lies?

As Political Confederacy, or Conspiracy, never was Catholicism so unanimous, never more bent on grasping material authority, never less scrupulous as to the means. It has given France a Louis Napoleon and a German war (at least it was a main cause, and *sine quâ non*), and it will cost Europe much further misery and bloodshed. But if necessary, it can wait. This is a mighty strength, this power of waiting. The repulse of a Chambord gives but a temporary check. The Church can let a whole generation die out, and wait, but not idly. On the other hand perhaps the Modern World may say at last, rather suddenly, by its strongest men, 'Enough! we are tired of all this: get out of the way!' Which will *not* be the same as saying, 'Avec Dieu . . . il faut en finir à jamais'—the Supreme Pontiff being in reality no more the Almighty's vicegerent than was that idol the Norway man dang down with his broad-axe, and which was full of mice and spiders.

When sunset reddened the pyramid of pinnacles and roofs; when the full tide flowed and rippled all round the ancient walls, silvered by a clear moon; when pure dawn spread iridescent over the wet sands; this curious Mount and its amphitheatre put on varying and wonderful robes, each more picturesque than the last; and I was not surprised to find that the quiet French gentleman, with artistic face and bushy gray hair, who sat daily at the *table d'hôte* of the 'Golden Lion,' and used to play with the landlady's little daughter,

had, coming as a casual visitor, made the island-mount his abode for more than two years, or that he was said to know every stone in the huge heterogeneous pile of buildings.

It was with regret that I received orders from our despotic guard, or whatever his proper title, to enter the *diligence* that must carry us away from 'The Wonder of the West ;' but there was no help but to submit to be packed with three priests and four pilgrims into a too, too narrow and airless space, and so creep uncomfortably over the sands in the morning sun. French coach guards and drivers expect no fees, and *en revanche* are often, it must be confessed, brutally rude to their passengers. There seems to be no medium quality of French manners ; you have politeness or brutality—never that rough, off-hand way (*brusquerie* they would call it) accompanied by real attention to your wants, which is so common in England. Still, with whatever exceptions or modifications it is the rule that in France civil manners are regarded among all classes indifferently as the natural and proper condition of human intercourse ; in England not so. There they are looked upon as an aristocratic luxury, an affectation, or, in many cases, as a sign of dependence, flattery, and favour-seeking.

Our *diligence* to-day from Pontorson to Dol was supplementary to the regular one, and the driver, next whom I sat, by office probably an ostler, proved civil. He openly expressed, like everyone of his class I heard speak on such subjects, his abhorrence of all priests—'crows,' 'idlers,' 'scoundrels'—and greeted the name of Henri Cinq with a contemptuous laugh. After a very long level piece of road between poplars and oaks, the coach zigzagged up a steep hill, which I mounted straight by footpath, and gained a magnificent prospect westward of the boundless wooded plain running up to the Bay of Mont St. Michel, with its pinnaced island-cone in the midst.

Again on the coach, I consulted my newly published

Murray for an hotel, and found under *Avranches*, 'Inns: H. Belanie; H. de Londres, garden behind; H. de France, moderate;' but the driver denied the existence of any Hôtel Belanie in Avranches: the Hôtel de Londres was the chief inn; and this I found to be the case. But, now arrived in the town, and applying at 'The London,' I find it choke-full; to-morrow is the great annual fair of Avranches; and I am glad to put up with a small bedroom looking on the noisy and dirty yard of the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Afterwards in peregrinating the town I discovered a showy *Café Bellamy*, which gives you coffee, brandy, billiards, but is in no sense an hotel, evidently the origin of the guide-book's imaginary 'Hôtel Belanie.' I should have been very glad if it had proved a real one.

Avranches from its hill, and lofty old walls and bastions, commands, especially from the terrace of the Public Garden, great woody prospects nearly all round, the little river Séez winding through to the Bay of the Mount. Near an angle of the walls, at one of the chief points of view, stood the great old Cathedral, which fell gradually into decay, and was finally destroyed in the first Revolution. One stone left among the grass and trees of the platform bears an inscription saying that on this stone Henry II., King of England, knelt in penance for the murder of Thomas à Becket. The streets of Avranches are mostly ugly, and the new Cathedral approaching completion on a wide space adjoining the Public Garden (and not at all, *pace Murray*, 'near the site of the old one') has even more than the usual dead and loveless look of modern Gothic work.

The Fair spread itself all over the town; cows, sheep, pigs, country folk coming and going; the horses showing off on a long boulevard; the bare space between the new Cathedral and the Public Garden bespread with rows of booths for the sale of cloth, cutlery, toys, cakes and fruit. The book-stalls were numerous, offering a great variety;

classical works of French literature, books of devotion, books of amusement. Of modern writers the favourites seemed to be Dumas, Châteaubriand (no doubt from his local celebrity), and Paul de Kock. Among the cheaper books in gay paper covers were always found *The Perfect Physician*, *Cookery Book*, *Ladies' Oracle*, *Key to Dreams*, *Songs of Theresa*, and many other song books; *The Tower of Nesle*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *Paul and Virginia*, Perrault's *Tales of the Fairies*, *Cameralzaman*, *Aladdin*, *Ali Baba*, and translations of *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Against a dead wall hung rows of highly coloured prints, religious and other; also cheap maps, on which I found Alsace and Lorraine ingeniously tinted purple, France being blue, and Germany red. There were merry-go-rounds, and there were shows, of which I visited two, one being 'the Principal Scenes of the War,' represented by puppets 'functioning by electricity.' All I recollect of it is that one scene purported to show 'Count Bismarck and the King of Prussia playing the fiddle along with Marshal Le Bœuf—the showman's version of *nous sommes trahis!*' The other exhibition was 'Grand Historical Panorama of the War,' in which one very remarkable fact was noticeable—the Prussians in every combat were getting the worst of it.

This reminds me that in the dining-room of our hotel, Hôtel d'Angleterre, hung an engraving which I took at the first glance to be Death on the White Horse, and so it proved to be; but Death (a terrific skeleton) had in this case two companions with fiend-like faces—King William, sword in hand, riding on one side, Bismarck, with a blazing torch, on the other. In one feeling at least France is tolerably united, namely, in hatred of 'the Prussians.' The sturdy graziers and horse-dealers at the *table d'hôte*, however, took no apparent notice of this work of art, but ate largely of the plentiful meals provided, emptied huge jugs of cider, and agreed that everything had sold well; Estelle,

our slim landlady, and Honorine ('n'rine!'), our stumpy maid, and the landlord with perpetual soup-ladle and carving-knife, doing wonders to supply the insatiable throng.

Out of the confusion of the Fair, I walked a mile or two along a pretty green road and back partly by a field path, not a common thing in France; of which walk I remember chiefly two trivial enough particulars, a clear brooklet running by a grassy bank, and a very old woman breaking stones by the roadside. At nightfall in the town I noticed an elderly woman doing the office of lamplighter, and followed her some distance from street to street to see the old gables and corners start out of gloom into chiaro-oscuro.

Returning from Avranches by *diligence* to Dol, I found Pontorson as before full of priests and pilgrims, and noticed anew the contemptuous looks and mutterings bestowed upon them by the people in the street and on the coach. The fisher-folk of the Mount, and even the innkeepers, were of the same mind.

So to Dol, whence a few miles of railway carried me to St. Malo, and I gladly smelt the sea again. The first look was discouraging, a wide dock bordered with timber and coal yards, but the omnibus rattled us past this, and in through a great fortified gate among tall narrow houses. The mediæval walls, bastions, and gates of St. Malo remain perfect to this day, and moreover (what I have never seen elsewhere) are still in use, mounted with rifled cannon, paraded by sentries—of the 25th Regiment of the Line, and a raw-looking, boyish regiment it is at present. Strengthened here and there, and backed with earthworks, these ramparts present on the whole the same appearance as when they were completed by Anne of Brittany some three centuries ago, and closely encincture the tight packed mass of tall gray stone houses. If you took an oval toy-box and packed it full of toy houses rising some inches above its rim all round, and put one tall spire in the middle, it would be like

the compact old town as seen from a distance. It stands on a rocky promontory, once an island; having its tidal harbour to the south, across which lies St. Servan, once a suburb, but of late set up for itself; the broad and beautiful estuary of the Rance to the west; strands and sandhills eastwards; and to the north a bay crowded with rocky islets of all shapes and sizes. Châteaubriand was born at St. Malo, and the family mansion is now the Hôtel de France, adorned all over with copies and engravings of his theatrically-posed portrait. The author, as everyone knows, erected his own monument on a conspicuous point of one of the rocky islets aforementioned, accessible to posterity at low water; and in due time his body was laid therein. *Requiescat in pace.* A French writer in speaking of it beautifully exclaims, 'Ni arbres, ni fleurs, ni inscription. Le roc, la mer, l'immensité! Que de poésie et de réflexion dans ces trois mots!'

The narrow lofty streets of St. Malo often reminded me, by more senses than one, of the old town of Edinburgh, but every now and again you come to a flight of steps leading to the ramparts and the pure sea-wind. In the open space fronting the Hôtel de Ville stands a statue of the town's naval hero, Duguay-Trouin.

I put up at the Hôtel Franklin, where is a good *table d'hôte*, but no common sitting-room, a great want. The house is kept by a widow and her daughter, and all the attendants are of the softer sex, but, alas! neither spring nor summer now represented among them. We were ministered to by nine women, ranging from forty to seventy years of age, very civil and attentive, but the effect was depressing, and the more so from our dining-room being so overlooked by a tall gray stone building opposite, that the sun never shone into it. It was an elderly kind of establishment altogether. At the very top of that building opposite, up countless stairs, I had my bedroom, looking straight down on the town wall, which, like that of Derry, is the chief

promenade, and over the harbour and the town of St. Servan and far away. This wide prospect always restored my spirits; and I found, moreover, that the excursions round St. Malo were very numerous and varied; so retained the sky bed room for a week.

Several times I crossed the estuary by sailing-boat and by steamer to Dinard; rambled over strands and rocks; bathed; walked through meadows, woods, and orchards by a beautiful path, to the craggy corner of the river, here among fir-tree roots, there among the ripe apples, which the peasants and their families were gladly shaking to earth. Much mistletoe grows here and in Normandy, and the French, making no use of it themselves, send it across to England.

One day, my boatman lamented feelingly the downfall of the Sham-Napoleon (very real in his eyes). 'France,' he said, 'in his hands was like a flower!'—at the culmination of prosperity and glory.

At this Dinard, now getting much built over, a Duke and a Count have each lately usurped one of the rough sea promontories, and enclosed it with a wall so as to cut off all access or passage, and the Duke's barrier must be something like half a mile long. This may be legal, but no law can make it just.

The sister town of St. Servan, to which one walks at low water across the harbour mouth, and at other times crosses by ferry-boat, is rather ugly, but has pretty fields on the Rance, and a tall old castle beside the sailing-boat pier. On the hill opposite this, stands a quaint little chapel '*En l'Honneur de Notre Dame de la Salette*,' inside of which behind a low railing is a sort of set scene built up of painted wood, canvas, moss, &c., with three figures in coloured plaster—the Virgin Mary appearing to a peasant boy and girl; and here drops in from time to time a woman or an old fisherman, to pray.

From this pier also you can sail, as I did one day, across

the broad, beautiful estuary, bordered with rocks, sandy creeks, and wooded hills, to Dinard, and there take the *diligence* for Dinan, some dozen or fourteen miles through a country of roughish fields and groves and two or three dirty Breton villages of gray stone, with old ragged churches of nondescript architecture. Dinan ('River Fortress,' no doubt), on craggy platform above the winding and poplar-bordered Rance, with mighty towers and walls, themselves like other cliffs, hung with every kind of verdure, and two big churches—one restored, with the very worst rose window I ever saw,—I have no room to describe Dinan; or its market-day, watched by hero Du Guesclin, its white-capped Bretonesses, mostly broad and stumpy, and little Breton cattle, its ballad-singers, and its travelling Doctor, in splendid gold-laced robe and tasseled cap, who delivered such glib and graceful orations, and drew teeth on his public platform, while drum and cymbal clashed overhead in the hands of two scarlet-robed attendants, a young man and woman, on whose bare black heads the noon-day sun smote with all its strength.

Dinan, like Avranches and many another place up and down the Continent, has its special English colony, a set of people whose aim is cheapness of living combined with as much salubrity and agreeableness as may be. Life in such a colony, I fancy, is seldom enviable on the whole, however picturesque its surroundings. The *émigrés* are mostly disappointed, discontented people, pinched in means, at a loss for occupation, disliking and distrusting the foreigners among whom they are forced to pass their days, and dealing largely in gossip concerning their fellow-exiles.

I returned to St. Malo by morning steamer on the Rance, now brimming with crystal green salt-water; one broad bright reach and gay headland, village, lawn, and wood opening after another, till we sighted the huge black rock midstream that stems in turn the river and the ocean floods,

and stopped under the circling walls and bastions of the old Saint's town.

But who was Saint Malo? Methinks, reader, 'twould puzzle you to trace him. Alban Butler tells us that Saint Malo, sometimes called Maclou and Mahout (died about A.D. 565), was the son of Went or Gwent, a Welsh chieftain, the founder of *Caer Gwent*, now *Chepstow*. The boy was baptised by Brendan, the famous Irish missionary, and placed for education in the monastery of *Llancarvan* (Glamorganshire). He took holy orders from Brendan, and crossed the sea into *Armorica*, where he abode with a hermit named Aaron, also native of Great Britain, living on a rocky island near the town of *Aleth* (which town must have stood somewhere near where *St. Servan* now is). The chief men of the Bretons had accepted Christianity, and protected these holy men, but most of the surrounding people were still pagans. After a time Maclou was appointed Bishop of *Aleth*, and held that office forty years, being also head of the monastery he had caused to be built on the neighbouring rocky island after the hermit Aaron's death. That island was long known as *Ile d'Aaron*. Bishop Maclou, being hard pushed by persecutors, fled to *Saintes* (on the *Charente*); after a time he returned to *Aleth*, named his successor, then went back to *Saintes*, where he died ('November 16, *circa* 565'), and where his relics were long preserved in a church bearing his name. These relics were, sometime in the eight hundreds, transferred to the Island of Aaron, thenceforward perhaps named after *St. Malo*. Or perhaps this alteration of name did not definitely take effect till three centuries later, when the monastery was changed into a cathedral, and the seat of the Bishop transferred thereto from *Aleth*. *Aleth* is long ago utterly decayed and lost. The hermit's rocky island thus became an ecclesiastical centre, and later in its history was made into a strong fortress by Anne of Brittany, about the year 1500, whose castle and walls have safely resisted

several sieges. And now a few words on Maclou's teacher, Saint Brendan. He was an Irishman, disciple of Saint Fenian of Clouard; went to France; lived some years in the Welsh monastery of Llancarvan; returned to Ireland, founded the monastery of Clonfert (County Galway) and other monasteries and schools. 'His happy death arrived May 16, A.D. 578, when he was in the 94th year of his age.'

I may add that the *Mo* which so commonly begins the names of Irish saints—as Mochua, Mochuda, Molaga, Molaisé—is a prefix of endearment—'My'—the equivalent word in Breton being *Ma*; therefore our saint's name is very likely to have been Clou, called affectionately My Clou. There is a St. Clou of Metz, as well as the more famous St. Cloud, son of King Clodomir. All these names, with the old Clodomir too, and Clodovic, and Clovis, and the modern Claude, have probably their origin in the Roman Claudius, otherwise Clodius—which was first perhaps given to a lame or halting man.

On a sunshiny autumn morning, from the deck of the Jersey steamer, I bade adieu to France—the land of extremes and contrarities, of good dinners and bad smells, of Paris and Mont St. Michel, of Fénelon and Paul de Kock, of St. Louis and Napoleon the First, and Napoleon the Third. Yet, withal, I could heartily say,

Adieu, thou pleasant land of France!

At St. Helier's I found myself once more in the midst of Bass's Pale Ale, Chops and Steaks, and the Tichborne Trial. But another thing struck me much more, the disgraceful disorderliness of the streets at night. We call France immoral. You may travel through it from end to end, and see no vice unless you look for it. England is peculiarly and properly sensitive as to certain *immondices*, and astoundingly thick-skinned as to other and worse. Will the day ever

come when the rivalry of Nations will be in laws, manners, and arts?

I left France with the conviction in my mind that Henri Cinq was going to have his innings. And so it would have befallen had the man been more pliable, less obstinate—or chivalrous, as you choose to describe him.

RAMBLE THE TWENTIETH.

IN THANET.

[1877.]

THE delight and stimulus of foreign travel are undeniable: yet I like best the pictures of places and things which I know, and the account of a journey that takes me over familiar ground. The inexhaustible interest of nature and humanity manifests itself when the familiar is set in a new light—not a stage effect but the light of a new observer's mind; he may sometimes give us curious hints of truth, perchance help to educate our own insight. Superficial strangeness sets children and clowns awondering; but I am oftener vexed than pleased to have my attention so disproportionately intruded on by a mere difference in head-gear, or of people saying 'oui' or 'ja' instead of 'yes.' As to Orientals, Red-Skins, South Sea Islanders, &c., what are they to me but lay-figures dressed up and set moving? To get at themselves is hopeless. Even their native scenery I cannot make friends with. Great rivers, vast plains, huge mountain-regions (belching fire at points), tropical forests, are no doubt the epic poems of landscape and the glory of earth: I should like to see the Wonders of the World, note briefly my impressions thereof, and come home again to ramble and muse among woods and rocks and beach pebbles. It is a good thing to know one's country, and think about it (my country is the United Kingdom); so I

shall not be deterred from writing the name of Margate, and praising it too, although it has so long been the custom to speak of that seaside town in a tone of good-humoured derision. *Murray* declares it to be 'without doubt the least aristocratic of "all Abigails in cast gowns,"' which is Horace Walpole's phrase for watering places that mimic the capital. In that extremely miscellaneous collection called *Poems of Places* edited by Mr. Longfellow (which is like a child's museum—an amber necklace, a chandelier-drop, a fir-cone, an eagle's feather, an empty pin-box, and so forth) Margate is represented by Ingoldsby's *Vulgar Little Boy*. I doubt if any romantic adventure or love scene in all Mudie's Library has happened there; unless indeed that exploit, recorded by Charles Dickens, of the celebrated pirate, Captain Boldheart, aged ten. 'Boldheart now took his mother down into the great cabin, and asked after the young lady with whom, it was well known to the world, he was in love. His mother replied that the object of his affections was then at Margate, for the benefit of sea-bathing (it was the month of September), but that she feared the young lady's friends were still opposed to the union. Boldheart at once resolved, if necessary, to bombard the town.' He managed otherwise, however, and with a gallant boat's crew surprised the bathing machines and cut out his Adored, aged seven.

One day in the summer of last year London suddenly became an oven, a furnace; no moving, no breathing, no thinking; till, with an effort of despair after a night of torture, I thought—of Margate. Fresh and cool everybody had described it, open to the north wind; and it was not far away. Cockney, prosaic, vulgar in the direst degree, of course; but fresh and cool. I took the train and slept that night in Margate. Fresh air I found; and also two of the most romantic particulars I have met in any English place: first, a dining-room where they were catching fish for dinner

out of the window; second, a man whose profession it seemed to be to recite from memory classical English poetry in the open air. He was giving *To be or not to be*, as I passed along the sea-terrace by star-light, and followed it with *Alexander's Feast*: a short broad-chested man of middle age, with intelligent light gray eyes, he threw back one leg, raised his head and spoke out his 'piece' with good voice, just emphasis and moderate gestures. In giving him my tribute I ventured to add a compliment for his delivery of verse—in a better style, I thought, than is usual with Actors. Indeed, most actors go upon false principles, holding themselves at liberty to make effects of various kinds in neglect of, and often in defiance of, the metre; the true doctrine being that any delivery of a metrical passage is wrong in which its metrical quality is lost. To combine the metrical (which is *sine quâ non*) with the other effects desirable is just the triumph of the elocutionist. Actors usually argue that histrionic delivery is under different conditions from recitation; but if what they are speaking has any business at all to be in metre it is their business to make the most of it *as metre* and not otherwise; and it is better to err on the side of over-distinctness than to permit the least confusion. The metrical forms of Shakespeare ought to be studied and delivered with as much care as those of any musical composer. But the ambition of most actors in this matter seems to be to prevent their audience, as far as possible, from perceiving where any line begins or ends; which is just the same as a musical executant's losing hold of *time* in the dread of marking it with vulgar emphasis.

I did not say all this to my elocutionary friend; but, in reply to the little compliment that I had seldom heard verse so well given in a theatre, he drew himself up and exclaimed in a tone of dignity, 'For God's sake, sir, don't compare me to the actors!' So I went my way, pleased (as I always am) to find a man well satisfied with himself. Afterwards

I came upon him now and again by daylight, reading to the public out of a book of selections ; he did not always choose his subjects well, but it was evident that an *al fresco* Public Reciter could get a hearing and might wander from town to town in summer pleasantly enough, and bringing pleasure to others. The story-teller is welcome everywhere. He would have a wide choice of tales and poems, old and new ; and thus carried upon the tones of a living voice, many a thought and fancy would sow themselves in people's memories ; Childhood and Age would listen at the street corner, and the dullest brain be sometimes pierced with a shaft of Apollo. I should like to try it myself, if I had the gifts. No small body of men, women, and children get their living in England by striving to amuse that mysterious entity the Public, and it is rather surprising how little inventive they are in their methods. I only recollect one example of literary reading in the open air in London : when 'the Caudle Lectures' were coming out in *Punch*, a man used to read aloud the new number in Argyle Place, Regent Street, and similar creeks off the great thoroughfares, rewarded by a good many stray pence. In circumambient music, a good glee party of four could not miss large popular acceptance. I have not met the like these many years.

The romance of that first evening in Margate, with its window-fishing, sea-sunset, summer-starlight, and wandering reciter of poetry, was dispelled like some fair dream next morning by an uproar of discordant noises. This popular watering-place has a superabundant share of street performers of the too ordinary kind, nigger minstrels, jugglers, organ-grinders, Punch and Judys, comic singers, all the monotonous variations of noisy vulgarity. The banging, clattering, yelling and squeaking, begin about eight in the morning, and go on till after the shades of evening have closed. An extreme and unreasonable form of liberty, surely, this liberty to adopt as your trade (being of an idle

and vagrant turn) the making as much noise as possible, interrupting the lawful avocations of countless involuntary auditors, and causing them great discomfort, distress and injury. By the Consolidated Criminal Code which we are promised I trust that undue noise will be held to constitute an assault. One has no more right to beat my *tympanum* than to box my *auricula*.

In short I was banged and squeaked out of my lodging, which had a fine sea-view westward, and unwillingly resolved on London again; but strolling sadly along the eastern terraces of Margate, which are called Cliftonville, I saw 'Apartments' in a window there, went in, took them, and lived happy (as the world goes) ever after. It was very fresh, bright and breezy; the great blue sea-floor, or green with broad purple shadows, stretched away right and left beyond our grassy lawn, and over the horizon to Skagerrack whence the north wind comes, turning up on its way innumerable foam-crests. Reckoning eastward our house was five doors from Holland; travelling in that direction along the line of latitude, you would pass three houses in a row with ours, a coastguard station in its tamarisk hedge; and then, after two pleasant miles by unfenced pathways through the famous cornfields of Thanet, find yourself on Foreness, the eastern-most point of the Island of Great Britain, and look down from your swarded platform of chalk cliff on brown sea-weed and the German Ocean; taking wings across which you alight in Walcheren,—a place, however, in which no one with wings would be likely to stay.

Mr. Ruskin, like other people, is hard upon Margate: 'If we enumerate the English ports one by one, from Berwick to Whitehaven round the island, there will hardly be found another so utterly devoid of all picturesque or romantic interest as Margate,' and he is much surprised that Turner was so fond of painting it; 'he repeated Ramsgate, Deal, Dover, and Margate, I know not how often.' (*Harbours of*

England, p. 39.) To a simple mind the accessibility is reason enough; and when 'Turnerian topography' is allowed for, and the fact that sea and sky are very commonly the chief features in our painter's work, there seems nothing to be surprised at. In fact this 'Margate' (in the *Harbours of England*) is a study of rough waves and stormy clouds, helped out by a gleam of chalk-cliff. But the real Margate is not so 'devoid' as Mr. Ruskin declares, and there is more to be seen there than terraces and bathing-boxes,—which last, by-the-bye, have an historical connection with the town, for in Margate, about the year 1790, bathing-boxes made their first appearance on any shore.

A 'gate' is, properly, not an obstacle in a passage, but the passage itself, the going-place. 'Gait,' manner of going, is a modification of the same word; the Scotch word (variously spelt) means way, road—'I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen;' 'Gang your ain gate.' The 'ghaunts' which allow you to come down to the edge of a Hindoo river are doubtless the same things, in fact and in etymology, as the 'gates' in the Kentish chalk-cliff, and such places must in every country have been notable points in topography. *Mergate* (the old form) one would say at first sight must certainly mean 'Sea-Gate;' but a small river or brook is sometimes called 'Mere,' and there used to be one running to the sea, perhaps in a network of little channels, through the shallow valley which is still called The Brooks, near the South-Eastern Railway Station. This rivulet has disappeared, sucked-up probably by the town water-works. But Mergate, or Margate, was formerly but the name of the harbour or roadstead; the village was St. John, so marked on the map of Kent in Holland's *Camden* (*Britannia*, 2nd edition, 1637); a village with one foot on sea and one on land, possessing a fine large church, even then of a venerable antiquity, the sepulchral brasses inlaying its floor already worn by the feet of many successive generations of mortals. Camden sounds 'the singular

praise of the inhabitants of *Tenet* [Thanet], those especially that dwell by the roads or harbours of Margate, Ramsgate, and Brodstear. For, they are passing industrious, and as if they were *Amphibii*, that is *both land creatures and sea creatures*, get their living both by sea and land, as one would say with both these elements: they be Fisher-men and Ploughmen: as well Husbandmen as Mariners: and they that hold the ploughtaile in caring the ground, the same hold the helme in steering the ship.' (Holland's Camden.) Furthermore in shipwrecks (he tells us) 'these men are wont to bestir themselves lustily in recovering both ships, men, and merchandize endangered:—lodging-houses and bathing-machines being yet undiscovered, nor so many of the inhabitants of Thanet devoted to supplying visitors with shrimps, saddle-donkeys, pleasure-boats, and a thousand other luxuries. It was when George the Third was a handsome young king that the English people began to suspect sea-air and sea-bathing to be salubrious, and that it might not be a bad thing for Londoners to repair to the coast in summer-time. The fashion rose and flowed like the tide itself, and has never since receded. Margate Bay, with its fine sands, so accessible from London, was the favourite resort, and sprang into fame and importance. Cecil Square, with the large Assembly Rooms resting on pillars, and several trim streets round it, were then built, and still retain a pleasant last-century flavour. The name Margate gradually superseded 'St. John,' but had not done so entirely in the year 1800. (*See Hasted's History of Kent.*)

Many visitors, I suspect, never so much as see that ancient church of St. John the Baptist, large, low, three-aisled, with square tower and pointed belfry. Parts of it may possibly be eight centuries old. The font is carved with the rival Roses. A brass dated 1443 begs your prayer for the soul of John Daundelyon, Knight; and one of the original five bells (there are now eight), the tenor, is named 'Daundeleon'

after its donor, perhaps the same John, and inscribed, 'Daundeleon I.H.S. Trinitati . sacra . sit . hæc . campana . beata.'

The usual dismal postscript must follow: 'In 1845, the venerable fabric was restored and beautified at an expense of 1,166*l*., raised by voluntary subscription, when a new altar-piece [?] was added, also a new entrance at the west end; the middle aisle was repaired, and the east and west windows restored.' (*Keble's Guide*.) The only comfort is in the smallness of the sum; but there was, to all appearance, as much scraping away of venerableness as could well be afforded for the money. As to 'voluntary subscription,' the phrase is convenient, but we all know that subscriptions are in most such cases no more voluntary than an affair with your dentist. Nay, much less voluntary. You go, for good reasons, to the dentist; the vicar, for none, comes to you.

The words on a tombstone in the churchyard caught my attention, from the mixture of particularity and vagueness: 'James Brown, Professor of Music, aged 38, and Susannah his wife, aged 46, who were accidentally drowned in Green Sole Pond by the Roadside leading to Sandwich, 6 Nov. 1841.' One wants to know more. How interesting would tombstones be if each carried a brief biography, the briefest possible in most cases, but always with some help or hint towards discrimination of one character and career from another. A tombstone is usually the crowning platitude of a dull human history; but the custom of giving a fact or two would now and again preserve something curious, and make the stone worth its room. I am told that in Utopia (Sir Thomas forgot to mention this) no tombstone is allowed to be set without license, and inscription of certain duly authenticated particulars of the deceased, fitly expressed, the graveyard being regarded as a solemn public registry; and many or most names are only permitted place on large

wall tablets, with date and place of birth and of death, and two or three other memoranda.

There are still some pleasant old corners near the churchyard, and the narrow High Street, characteristic of our old sea towns, runs down half a mile to the harbour, and shows you of an evening a piece of sunset sky with masts upon it. Cecil Square, already spoken of, and the neighbouring streets, up and down hill, are neither dull nor uncheerful. A certain narrow passage from the High Street lets you out suddenly to the sea-prospect and sea-breeze with an agreeable surprise. The harbour itself at high tide, one arm of stone protecting plenty of boats and a few coasters, is a pleasant sight; and the jetty beyond, toll free, is ruder and simpler, salter and breezier, than the theatrical sea platforms ('with real water') of Brighton and Hastings. The cliffs stretch away right and left, facing the sea-line, sea wind blows across, white waves course under; and Margate's is a real jetty, with the London steamers coming and going. The chief artificial amusement provided is a galvanic battery, by which lookers-on are the most amused. Margate has also a skating rink, which unluckily has spoiled one of the natural hollows in the cliff: a good-sized theatre wherein London stars shine in succession; and a 'Hall by the Sea,' which suggests Sea-Kings and Mermaids, but is really a music hall much like others, save that it has a small, but not choice, collection of beasts and birds in the back garden, approached through a sham Gothic Ruined Arch (fortunately 'unique'), and in front several plaster statues—including Neptune with his trident, seated in a tank, to symbolise, so a punster has affirmed, Spears and Pond (the spelling matters not), those enterprising managers of the hall.

If you go to the sea-side partly to be in the Fashionable Visitors' List, and to meet others whose names are also therein, you will perhaps not choose Margate; but if you

want fresh air, salt water, and a good stretch of sand, I do not know where you can do so well within a hundred miles of town. The sands, though not to be compared with the West of Ireland, are firm and spacious; and if a Bartlemy Fair occupies them in front of the old Mere-gate, you may find plenty of quietude to the eastward, all along to North Foreland.

The country inland, in that direction, if one cannot call it picturesque everywhere, I found to have charms. The wheat, very tall grown and of the richest gold colour, waved over the landscape for miles, in some places flowing away to the horizon. Thanet is renowned for wheat, and by the absence of fences a sense of joyous and opulent freedom is conferred on eye and mind. The fields are merely divided from each other by a strip of grass or by the pathway, and in summer time you walk along narrow lanes of tall wheat from farm to farm, the evening sun not seldom painting earth, sea, and sky in such gold and azure as Italy or Algeria could scarce outrival.

To the south-westward are more wheat-fields, with island groves here and there in the golden sea of plenty; and one footpath takes you through the village of Garlinge to a green field with old trees, a large farm-stead with barns and ricks, and presently, to your surprise, to a noble Castle-Gateway, piercing a square tower, and flanked with fragments of ancient masonry, alternate flint and brick; a Lion's Head open-jawed being carved in a conspicuous place. A large walnut-tree stands outside, facing the portal. This is what remains of the fortified old mansion of the Dent de Lyon family, great folk here under the first Edward. The last male thereof, John (of the bell?) died more than four centuries ago, and this gate we look upon was built before his time. Many a knight has ridden under its arch, many a fair lady. This evening the cows of Dandelion Farm are passing through it for milking. Beyond Dandelion (quaint

old name and place) a long path through the wheat brings you to a circular grove, whence you can bend to the right for Westgate-on-Sea.

Westgate is an old name and a new place; uncomfortably new; detached and semi-detached sea villas dropt about the cliff edge, a row of pretentious shops ending in a slough, wide raw roads new-stoned and solitary, new walls, new mounds in the soil everywhere; a dismal young pleasure-town at present in its hobbledehoy stage. But the little bay has a strand and bit of esplanade, and here stands a neat looking Hotel, with lawn-tent and croquet-ground, and a few people are discovered on chairs reading railway novels, and a few children digging on the shore, to whom enter a coastguardsman. This Westgate, however, has the comfort of reckoning itself a fashionable place, while its poor old mother Margate is confessedly vulgar; and I believe the air and bathing are good.

Burton speaketh not of the seaside melancholy; yet such a thing there is, and it might doubtless be enjoyed at Westgate. But to those in search of it I would more confidently recommend Herne Bay, some twelve miles westward. (It is over the border of Thanet; but let us just run across to it and back again.) It faintly reminds one of the city of 'magnificent distances,' as being a village scattered thinly up to make a show over the ground-plan of a large town; nor does it succeed in making a show, except in the matter of a clock-tower, 'the gift of Mrs. Ann Thwaites, widow of a London grocer,' which seems to suggest an exaggerated estimate of the value of time at Herne bay. There is a Pier, to sit awhile at whose gate would be good training for the post of lighthouse keeper. There are a couple of hotels, there are lodging-houses and shops, there are several inhabitants and probably a few visitors now and again. It is not even very easy to get away; the station being about a mile of flat road from the sea, just the distance one grudges either to drive or

to walk, through level fields which have some willows and a sluggish reedy rivulet.

One or two of these fields bore a crop which puzzled me, the corn-like stalk carrying a yellow head, small, egg shaped, filled with brown-yellow seeds. It was canary-grass, I found, *Phalaris canariensis*, a native of the Canary Isles, and grown here and in a few other places in Kent for the food of those little yellow song-birds which cannot bear our outdoor climate but are the pets of countless English homes; and one is not hurt to see a canary in a cage, for he was born there and could not live in freedom. The group of Spanish islands, by the way, is called after one of the number, Canaria, a name Pliny tells us in his *Natural History* (quoting Juba, Prince of Mauretania), derived from its breed of great dogs, of which Prince Juba himself had two; and thus the etymological connexion is made out between the little bird and the great dog.

To do Herne Bay justice, however, it ends pleasantly to the eastward, letting you out on an open breezy green slope above the sea, sward upon sand; and if you walk on following the gentle curve of the shore, you will reach after three miles those oddly double towers and spires called by the odd name of 'the Reculvers.' Towers and name are both of them monuments of modern barbarism and its disfiguration of a sight of venerable antiquity and high historic interest. Regulbium, the great Roman fortress, with nine seaports under its protection, has left here some shattered fragments of its flint and pebble walls, overrun with ivy, elder-bush and bramble. Ethelbert, our first Christian king, giving up his palace at Canterbury to Augustine, built one here for himself, Raculf Ceaster, out of the old Roman masonry. Egbert gave it to priest Bassa, who built a monastery or minster, and the name became Raculf-minster. Eadred gave the monastery to Canterbury Cathedral, and the charter, dated 949, may be seen in the Cathedral library. Camden

describes 'that Minster' as remaining in his day (at all events there was an old minster)—'the steeples whereof shooting up their lofty spires stand the mariners in good stead.' Up to the beginning of the present century (a murderous century for ancient buildings!) an ancient church still lifted its two pinnacles from the broken enclosure of the Roman walls. Hasted describes it (*History of Kent*, vol. ix., Canterbury, 1800), and gives an engraving of it. It was a large building of three aisles and a chancel, having two similar spires at the west end, and in one of these four bells. Though much altered and repaired, it 'seems (he says) to be in some measure the same building which was used as the abbey church.' 'At a distance it is a striking object, especially for the two spires. The style of building is various and of different ages; the middle isle and chancel being the most ancient. The west door is a pointed arch, of Caen stone, with Saxon ornaments, much decayed. The arch of the north door is circular. The quoins are of squared stones, the rest of the walls irregular stones mixed with Roman bricks. . . . There is a handsome flight of steps to the chancel from the aisle, and another at the approach to the altar. The chancel is separated from the church by three small circular arches, supported by two lofty round pillars, with plain capitals of a singular form. At the extremity of the east end is a handsome triplet of lancet windows, and four single ones of the same form on the north and south sides. At the west end of the body, over the door, is a *triforium*.' Further we are told of various monuments and brasses. In the year 1809 this venerable and interesting church was pulled down and razed to the ground, towers and all! But the seamark was found indispensable, and the Lighthouse Board built the present two nondescript towers, spires as venerable as a lamp-post or letterbox. It is doubtless because there are two towers that the name has slipt into its queer plural form. I suspect the reason of this

barbarous piece of destruction is indicated in the following words, also quoted from Hasted: 'Notwithstanding the institution of the separate vicarages of Reculver, Herne, and St. Nicholas . . . it seems the parishioners of the two latter continued as liable and subject, as before, to the repair of the mother church of Reculver, as the peculiar and proper inhabitants thereof' (ix. 124). Pity that Canterbury Cathedral could not have contrived some way of saving her daughter.

Coming back to Herne Bay station, we see, southwards, a pleasant woodland region of hill and dale running off towards the archiepiscopal City, twelve miles distant (you can travel by coach), and peeping out of one of the nearer groves, the church tower of the old village of Herne (some say called from those birds), and a few cottage roofs, peacefully regardless of that upstart and out-at-elbows brother by the sea. Church-towers are already almost the only old things we have left. The 'Restorers' have often let them alone, and this, at least, is something to be thankful for. I like a tower much better than a spire, and a spire best (*pace* the *Pride of Salisbury*) when nearest to its original form, a roof to the tower it rests on. That old gray tower of St. Peter's, three miles east of Margate, rising above its trees, spreads a grave dignity and solemn cheer over the landscape, many pathways through the corn converging to it. It is one of the most unaccountable things—a whole people showing through generations a strong feeling for beauty, building everything beautifully, small or big; and at another time the same people, unaltered on the whole in national character, not able to build anything beautifully, or even to care for the beauty of things handed down to them. Much of the banality of Margate's aspect from a distance is chargeable upon the conspicuous tower of Trinity Church, set on nearly the highest ground and rising 135 feet above it. Its ill proportions (in these reside the virtue or vice of a tower—

and what a mysterious and yet obvious thing *proportion* is!) make it an intrusive and inevitable eyesore. A well-proportioned tower on that hill would have been a blessing to sight and memory, and helped me to take a more tender farewell of the town it presides over. In spite of its ugly tower, however, I will maintain Margate—the Cliftonville quarter—to be a pleasant and wholesome seaside place.

But ere we leave let us glance at a little reminder of the Margate of our grandfathers in the shape of the sign-board of an inn facing the harbour. The ‘Hoy’ is the name of this inn; and a hoy, which is a large sailing-boat or small sloop (derived by Johnson from ‘*hou*, old French’) was a much-used conveyance between London and Margate in the days before steam. It was far-gone in October, in the year 1790, that a certain Margate Hoy made a trip down the Thames of which some record happens to be preserved. We are told of its ‘rough accommodations’ (though the voyage sometimes lasted two days and nights), its ‘weather-beaten, sunburnt captain,’ its ‘honest yet slender crew,’ and that ‘comfortable ambassador between sea and land’ with sailor-trousers and the white cap and whiter apron of a cook of Eastcheap. It was blowing weather, o’erwashing billows drove the passengers below deck into the not very savoury nor very inviting little cabin, where they were comforted ‘with cards and cordials.’ One of the passengers, a dark, handsome young man, was notable for his volubility of assertion, a ‘hearty thoroughpaced liar,’ who according to his own account had travelled the world, and assured them phœnixes were common enough in Upper Egypt, with many other ‘wild fablings’ which could not have received a moment’s credence if told on shore. There was a lad ‘apparently very poor, very infirm, and very patient,’ whose eye was ever on the sea with a smile. He had laid in only a solitary biscuit for provision, and was going to the Infirmary for Sea-bathing at Margate. He expressed

great hopes of a cure, and when asked whether he had any friends where he was going, he replied 'he *had* no friends.' I should not wonder if this friendless lad (who has long ago been cured of his scrofula) tasted that day a share of the 'cold meat and salads' which formed the private stores of a little City clerk, only fifteen and small of his age (the other day he was a Blue-coat Boy), who, and his sister, a pale extremely quiet young woman some ten years older than he, were also among the passengers in the *Hoy* that day. Their names were Mary and Charles Lamb, and he had got a short holiday from the South Sea House, where he drudged at that time. They were 'happy for a brief week at Margate,' their 'first sea-side experiment;' and the recollection of this week, when Charles was a middle-aged clerk in the East India House, and Mary an old maid, with recurring attacks of mental disease, induced them sometimes to try another holiday at the sea-side, not with the like success. 'We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourne a third, and we are at this moment doing dreary penance at Hastings!' Lamb confesses himself, in the same essay, no lover of the salt foam—it 'nourishes a spleen,' and exclaims, 'I am sure that no town-bred or inland-born subjects can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places.' I am glad, though, that the kind brother and sister had their brief happy week at Margate, and when I see the sign-board of *The Hoy* this pleasure of memory revives.

One of the things that weighs a good deal with me in choosing a town to stay at is the convenience or inconvenience of the railway station. Stations differ wonderfully. Eastbourne has one of the best arranged; Lewes, not far away, one of the most odious. The South-Eastern Station at Margate is pleasant. It stands close to the main thoroughfare; you go straight to the booking-place, then straight to the platform with its bookstall and benches, and

in due time through a barrier to your train, all under roof. If you go there to meet friends, you from outside the barrier see the train come in and your friends approach. There are two doors for entrance, two others for exit. All is simple and easy. But the Chatham and Dover station is one of those that try the temper. First, there is the extra stretch of dusty or muddy road, which you grudge so much when driving in a hurry or plodding with a bag. The single door is blockaded with vehicles, trucks, luggage, ingoers and outgoers; you pass into a large room, but not large enough to avoid being stuffy and ill smelling, and sometimes stifling. Here you must wait till you have got your ticket, and when you squeeze through another crowded doorway you must leave your friends behind, if any have come to see you off. From the hot waiting-room you are suddenly shot out, perhaps in wind and rain, on an open platform, and too often have to linger there much longer than the time-tables led you to expect. But this is not all; if you are travelling Londonwards, you must go down a flight of steps, along an underground passage, and up another flight of steps to your windy waiting-place. The aggregate cost of the railway stations of this kingdom, and the atrocious inconvenience of so many of them, are facts that, taken together, reflect disgrace on railway engineers as a body. The variation of platform level, in reference to the average height of the carriage floors, is one piece of careless stupidity which very literally deserves this adjective 'atrocious,' for many deaths and mutilations are due to it.

I know it is easier in some respects to plan a terminus than a 'through' station; and Eastbourne is a terminus, and so is the South-Eastern at Margate. But the two stations at Ramsgate are—what shall I say?—termini, and both disagreeable. (A wild attempt, you may remember, was made to establish 'omnibi;' one pedantic cab-proprietor announced his 'omnibii:' at last that wonderful contraction

'bus, plural 'busses, evolved itself. But with *Terminus*, this Latin nominative walking straight into English without ceremony, what are we to do in the plural? 'terminuses' makes the flesh creep. And then we have to deal with Octopus and Syllabus and Incubus, all horrible monsters. The fewer words of this kind the better, and one trusts that Symposium is not likely to come into fashion, like Sanatorium and Aquarium; but I don't think we need fear 'Symposium.' It is derived, modernly, from σίψ, 'separate,' and πείσιον, 'essay-writing on a given theme,' and fortunately, neither the expression nor the practice seems likely to take root. It may be exhilarating to receive from an editorial Symposiarch the challenge to a solitary bout with one's own ink-bottle, and have the opportunity of explaining on paper how much, or how little, we know about many things; but i' faith! the old plan was jollier. All this, however, is parenthetic.) Hastings, to return, has a terminus, and so has Brighton, both wretchedly uncomfortable and inconvenient.

Cui bono, all this talk of railway stations? First, you must give me some license, an't please you, being a rambler, to ramble. Next, I would thus insinuate one argument, out of many, in favour of my opinion, or say conviction, that placing the chief part of the interior traffic of the kingdom, and almost the whole of the passenger traffic, in the hands of private trading companies was a national mistake, and that allowing it to remain there is a national mistake. Railway-stations, instead of presenting countless varieties—usually of discomfort—ought to be built as regards their principal parts on one well-considered plan: allowance to be made, as far as necessary, and no farther, for local circumstances. The doors, ticket-offices, waiting-rooms, &c., should always be in the same relative positions. The platforms ought to be of uniform height above the rails, that is about the height of the floor of the carriages (loaded) in

general use on the line. This, with a continuous footboard, would save many lives. As to the wine and gin shops on the platforms, I would also make a uniform arrangement; namely, that they should all pack up and disappear as speedily as possible; their existence there (as also in the pits of our theatres) being useless, noxious, and scandalous.

You can walk from Margate to Broadstairs pleasantly by the cliff edge, turning the angle at Foreness, coasting the pretty creek and strand of Kingsgate, winding up to the North Foreland lighthouse on its grassy headland, and thence sloping down to the old-new, half-built, half-pulled-down, straggling, uncomfortable looking town of Broadstairs. This path brings you in at the most interesting point, where the coastguard station overlooks the sea from its platform, and beside it rises one tall bay-windowed house, perhaps as old as the century, standing, half in the public lane, half in a close-grown wind-blown shrubbery. A thrice-famous Novelist was the tenant of this house for several years, finding a breezy refuge there from the great city. The keen-eyed, swift-walking figure of Charles Dickens (alas, but a Shade !) met me in Broadstairs at every turn.

According to Fuller's plan with his 'Worthies,' Dickens would probably have been placed among the men of Kent (notwithstanding the accident of his birth at Portsmouth), with the mark S.N. for 'Second Nativity.' His pleasantest childish recollections, and his mature preference, belonged to Kent of all the counties in England. He is not in general so fond as might have been expected of closely localising his country scenes, but he always enjoys bringing us into Kent, from *Pickwick* to *Great Expectations* and *Edwin Drood*. His family moved from Portsmouth to Chatham when little Charley was four; at Chatham he lived nearly five years, going first to a school for small boys and girls, and afterwards to a boys' school; at Chatham he made acquaintance with Random, Pickle, Clinker, Crusoe, Quixote and a host

of other faithful friends, and his recollections of Chatham 'clung to him all his life long.' The next move was to the metropolis, to be the main theme and region of his story-telling. The romance of modern London was discovered and displayed by this man's genius, and no one among his many followers has added anything of consequence to his work of enchantment. In *Edwin Drood*, he brought us back also to the neighbourhood of Furnival's Inn, one of his earliest independent lodgings.

His first visit to Broadstairs was in '37, when he was writing *Pickwick*. He lodged at No. 12 High Street; and liked the little bathing town so well that he came back year after year, and there finished *Nicholas Nickleby*. In '40 he was in Lawn House, among the corn-fields through which we have just walked from North Foreland. A season or two later he became the occupant of a house upon which he had long fixed his affections, this tall one before mentioned, in its wind-blown shrubbery, next the coastguard station, looking out on a green bastion of the chalk cliff which overhangs the sea, and where visitors lounge and read novels; and on a narrow lane zig-zagging down to the quaint wooden pier, which is something like the hull of a huge old stranded ship lying half afloat and half ashore. Fort House is the right name of this mansion; but it has rather absurdly been called 'Bleak House,' which sometimes sets vague-minded people in quest of the story of that name to look up the connection of ideas, where none exists.

One First of September (in the year '43 it was), Dickens writing a letter to an American friend, Professor Felton, from this house, says, 'In a bay-window, in a one pair, sits a gentleman with rather long hair and no neckcloth, who writes and grins as if he thought he were very funny indeed. At one he disappears, presently emerges from a bathing-machine, and may be seen, a kind of salmon-coloured porpoise, splashing about in the ocean. After that he may

be viewed in another bay-window on the ground floor, eating a strong lunch ; and after that walking a dozen miles or so, or lying on his back in the sand reading a book Sometimes he goes up to London (eighty miles or so away) . . . ' (Forster's *Life*.)

After about fourteen years' familiarity with Broadstairs, where many numbers of the *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Chuzzlewit*, *Copperfield*, and other world-famous serials were written, Dickens took leave of it finally in 1851, writing as a sort of adieu the paper 'Our Watering Place' in *Household Words*.

Was it while he was staying at Broadstairs (it was certainly in Kent) that I Patricius met him one day in Regent Street? With one sharp glance, and a quiver of the wide flexible nostrils, 'O lord!' he exclaimed, 'how are you?' and taking my arm walked off at five miles an hour towards a railway station. But great as his hurry was, he suddenly stopped short as quickly, and pressed with me into the edge of a crowd in the street to see what was happening. It was only a horse down, and Dickens hurried me along again, saying, 'I'm a country cousin now, and stare at everything when I come up.' A trivial anecdote, but it recalls the man. Nor was it a trivial incident to the worshipping youth: it was almost as though his arm were taken by an angel dropping from the sky!

In 1856 he bought that pleasant mansion on Gad's Hill which had been the distant envy of his boyhood ; and there, fourteen years afterwards (June 9, 1870), laid down for ever that busy pen, which had always so much superabundant force left as to date letters and notes in *words* (not figures) and add a lengthy flourish to the signature.

Dickens intended that his grave, too, should be in Kent. It was, and is, well known to many that he wished his bones to be laid at Rochester, and if possible in an old burial-ground beside the walls of the Castle. It was closed at the time of his death, but an order from the Home

Secretary (who can doubt?) would have been had for the asking, to allow this special interment. Be that as it may, the Dean and Chapter of Rochester Cathedral came forward to express their wish to have the honour of his grave within their bounds. The Deceased in his will wrote thus: 'I emphatically direct that I be buried in an inexpensive, unostentatious, and strictly private manner; that no public announcement be made of the hour or place of my burial. . . . I conjure my friends on no account to make me the subject of any monument, memorial, or testimonial whatever.' As to the wish of the Deceased (we pretend to consider such wishes sacred) and the spirit of the directions which he left, there could not be the smallest doubt.

But the *Times* wrote an eloquent leader, and Dean Stanley pressed the claims of his Abbey, and the vague Public muttered approval; and so—with some pretence of a verbal observance of his instructions—the grave of Charles Dickens (which would have conferred a new dignity and a pathos on the old towers of Rochester for whoso lingers there, and whoso flies past) was added to that most heterogeneous mortuary miscellany in Westminster, real tombs and sham tombs of all sorts and sizes, which I must confess makes hardly more impression of solemnity upon me than the British Museum. The name on the too public slab is already half-worn by half-regardless feet.

The unfinished *Edwin Drood* has the marvellous old touch. No other hand could have written a page of it. The scenes of the little cathedral city of Cloisterham (altered from Rochester) are so finely painted, in a mixture of real and ideal colouring, as to help us to accept (this applies to many other parts of the Dickens novels) and half believe in some of the queerest figures and stagiest dialogues. The fun is perhaps not more forced than in *Our Mutual Friend*, but alas!—though in some respects the diligent writer naturally gained skill and flexibility,—in his most noted

characteristic, humour, the faults with which he started grew upon him instead of being purged away. If Dulness be the unpardonable sin in writing, Forced Effect is sometimes even harder to put up with.

The moment this is said, the winged word tossed into air flies back and stings one with remorse. Think, Patricius, think of the exquisite pleasure Charles Dickens added to your young years, and walk not away from Fort House and Broadstairs with any other farewell than the most tender and grateful. Farewell, O keen-eyed, swift-moving, sympathetic Shade!

Up the sloping path to a stunted copse, along a plateau, and down hill again, always with corn-fields round you, always the sea on your left, boundless to vision as Atlantic or Pacific, and you are soon in the ugly outskirts of Ramsgate, spoilt gardens, half-made roads, half-built streets, the mass of the town rising before you on another hill, crowned with (the one pleasing feature) a *coronnetted* church-tower resembling St. Dunstan's in Fleet Street.

Ramsgate is more fashionable than Margate. This, you remember, induced the Tuggs family to choose the former watering place. You may mention without a blush that you think of going down to Ramsgate, or that you have been staying there. It is larger, dirtier, noisier, and has crowded bye-streets and straggling suburbs of almost metropolitan repulsiveness. The sands, celebrated by Mr. Frith, R.A., are hedged in with walls and bathing machines, and dominated by a large and frightfully ugly railway station. There is a great double harbour, inclosed with huge stone piers, enlivened with shipping, and a harbour is an interesting thing. You can look down upon this with interest from the steep flights of steps leading to the eastern terraces; but will scarcely, unless a yachting man, care to live beside it. This west end of Ramsgate is twin to the east end of

Margate (one is apt to forget that the towns are *dos-à-dos*, one looking north, the other south, and to find the points of the compass gone astray when you make the short transit between). The Ramsgate houses are larger, perhaps, and the finish-off on this side is the late Mr. Pugin's pet church, with his own fanciful dwelling-house beside it. It seems to fresh-point the reiterated lesson of human transitoriness, this of building one's self an extra-special, private, particular kind of house, in the choicest of all possible sites; then, before it is really finished, or just after, or in a year or two, a knock comes to the new door, and the visitor is Pallida Mors.

From hereabouts the view of Pegwell Bay is striking, the line of opposite coast, faintly clear, carrying its fields, trees, and towns as if on a long-tongued promontory. But though there are good houses on this West Cliff, the quarter has a curious and depressing air of threadbare aristocracy, and when you pass into the fields, the superiority of Margate beomes asserted beyond dispute. You walk along the edge of the cliff, the sea below, cross one scrubby field, a second, and then—you come to a high stone wall, running down to the verge and effectually blocking all passage. How such a wretched monument of selfishness could have been established, and how endured, is inconceivable. That wall alone would decide me for ever against staying at West Cliff. To reach Pegwell Bay you must turn your back on the sea and gain an ugly dusty road, crowded with wheels and saddle-donkeys. It grows prettier; dips under shade of trees, gives you tempting glimpses of the Bay, framed in foliage, and soon leads downhill to the village of Pegwell (sophisticated with shrimps, skittles, and a skating-rink), and a little farther on, to the Cliff's End, and the sands. If you pursue your walk, you come to Ebbe's Fleet (now a farmhouse amid the marsh), haunted by the sworded ghosts of those Anglo-Saxon Pirates of whom all Englishmen are exhorted to be proud,*

* Green's History.

and the milder, but also stalwart, shade—for Rome knows how to choose her men—of Augustine with his crosier.

A couple of miles inland rises the fine old church of Minster, among orchards, cottages, and gray garden walls; a fine old manor-house keeping it grave company, and the village straggling off as it pleases. But following the Sandwich road, we come to a place where, overlooking the wide marsh and low sandhills, stands, on somewhat higher ground, a vast gray wall, massive, lofty, bound with cables of ancient ivy. We climb the bank, and stand where the Second Legion has stood many a time on parade or drill, within the great fortress of Rutupiaë, defence of Rome's chief landing-place in her island of Britannia. It is now called Richborough. Three broken lines of the great walls of the square remain, the fourth destroyed by the crumbling of the bank. In sight, from among these trees, peep the roofs of the old Cinqueport, which succeeded to the honours of Rutupiaë as the most frequented sea-gate of Britain. There landed Richard Lion-Heart, after his Austrian prison, and walked barefoot to Canterbury to thank God and Saint Thomas; there the Third Edward often took ship, and there landed triumphant, after Crecy and Calais.

Sandwich, too, has had its day, for the little grains of sand kept creeping in, and at last choked up the proud and busy haven. Slow-winding Stour admits but a coaster or two to lie at Fisher Gate, and in the perspective of the High Street you will see perhaps three people at a time, and a dog asleep at a shop-door. A little farther southwards is the level stretch of coast where, on two occasions, a great fleet of triremes and galleys pushed ashore, and Julius Cæsar's helmeted men opposed their shields to the showering darts of the barbarian, and pitched their square camp at last and planted their eagles.

But we have stepped again over the boundary of our Island, which indeed is little more than traditionally an Island

nowadays. There was a wide and deep passage formerly through which the ships between London and Sandwich, and London and France, were accustomed to sail, formed by the two channels of the river Stour, one flowing into the sea-creek running inland near Regulbium, the other at Rutupie; Thanet being the Delta. But when Sandwich Haven became dried up to uselessness,—or about the same time, say the year 1500,—so did the In-lade, as this north ship passage was called; the south passage being known as the Wantsome. In-lade used to be fordable at a place called, for that reason, Wade (*Vadum*, i.e., the place where you can *go, vado*, as Ford is the place where you can fare: the notion of water not being inherent in either word), and the old church of St. Nicholas at Wade is still there, no longer looking on passing ships but on the marshland with its flocks and herds, from which a sluice runs northwards into the sea, as if to keep up some show of reason for our claim to be an Island.

But what is the meaning of Thanet? Answer: *Non inventus*. After looking in many books I have got no more than I found in old Camden (P. Holland's translation)—‘This Iland Solinus named *Athanaton*, and in other copies *Thanaton*: the Britons, *Inis Ruhin*, as witnesseth Asserius: happily for Rhutupin, of Rhutupinæ, a Citie adjoining. The English Saxons call it *Tanet* and *Tanetland*, and we Tenet.’ The British name is generally said to be *Inis Ruim*, and Ramsgate derived therefrom. But doubtful etymologies are little interesting. ‘When you have *found* anything,’ says Goethe, ‘let me know. I have guesses enough of my own.’

I am glad we have still an Island of Thanet. Sancho was right in insisting on his territory being an island. The definite limits are comfortable to one's imagination, too apt to wander disconsolately in the vague. There is an artistic feeling, so to say, about living in an island; it ‘comes together.’

I should not object, if such things were now going, to take Thanet, nine miles by four of breezy cornfields, sea-fringed with chalk cliff, for my Barataria; and to have my palace on the rising ground above Minster, where King Ethelbert had his first meeting with Saint Augustine. I should see history enough out of my windows to serve a large-sized kingdom, if spread out thin. In view on a clear day are the Mouth of the Thames and its Essex shore, the ruined Roman strongholds of Regulbium and Rutupiae, Sandwich Haven, Deal, Dover Castle, the French cliffs at Calais; and in the middle distance, Canterbury Cathedral.

RAMBLE THE TWENTY-FIRST.

IN LONDON.

[1870.]

I RECOLLECT very well (though now a good while ago) the incidents of my first journey to London from a remote corner of the United Kingdom. The Great Western Railway carried me in, giving a highly prized glimpse of Windsor Castle on the right, at which I stared as long as possible ; then at each station I said to myself, ‘ Only three more,’ ‘ Only two more,’ ‘ Only *one more*,’—‘ THE NEXT IS LONDON!’ and at last, leaning out of the window, I exclaimed aloud, ‘ There’s the smoke of London!’—on which, I remember, a fellow-passenger opposite, whom my conduct had perhaps amused, remarked quietly but not without a certain emphasis and feeling—‘ Ha! there’s no smoke like it!’

Being a philosopher in the bud, I noted his remark, and thought myself lucky to meet with a typical specimen of the famous cockney (in no ill sense), the man whose true native country is London—like unto whom there is a vast multitude of men, women, and children.

At Paddington a four-wheeled carriage (I only knew the word ‘ cab’ through literature) attended me. I longed to sit outside, but it seemed unusual—might be ridiculous. However, after a short, internal debate, ‘ I’ll sit outside,’ said I, and the driver, to my relief, answering calmly, ‘ All

right, sir,' off we drove. It was a fine summer's evening, and London looked bright and gay. I admired the rows of large windows and well-painted doors, the long vistas of the streets, the vehicles, the swarming foot-passengers. Then came a fresh desire and a new scruple. I wished to question my driver, yet was loth to divulge my utter rusticity. Here also (as I remember with satisfaction) false shame lost the battle, and I said boldly, yet with a full sense of the absurdity, 'What street is this?—I never was in London before.' We turned from one thoroughfare of familiar name into another, and passed this and that famous edifice; every name, every object, full of the liveliest interest. The huge and costly buildings greatly impressed me, coming from a remote country village. I had a vague feeling of awe, and that the human beings here must be of powerful and commanding character, far different from all my little rural associates; and this notion was fed by the quickness and composure, the ready speech and adroit bearing of the metropolitans. I looked up to the cabman and the waiter with a mixture of admiration and humility, and was at first like wax in their hands.

The coffee-room of the hotel, with its brisk servitors, its novel and changing company, was then a palace of enchantment; though when I visited it some years afterwards it had dwindled to a dark and rather dingy place, haunted by commonplace guests and slipshod attendants, and the casual coffee-room conversation, once so delightfully amusing, had equally fallen off.

That first Month in London was certainly a delicious time. I was all by myself; knew nobody in particular, nor wanted to know. All day I went about, alone, seeing famous places: St. Paul's and the Abbey, of course, from top to bottom; the Tunnel, then a vista of melancholy toy-stalls (the melancholy is only in the reminiscence) and of not livelier accordion-music; its neighbouring Tower,

the beef-eaters and prison-cells, fetters and jewels, that hide under those four uncouth gray turrets. Dan Chaucer's Tabard (changed to 'Talbot') was not unvisited, nor Dr. Johnson's Bolt Court and St. John's Gate; and there were certain much more modern literary associations that invested Lant Street in the Borough, Golden Square, Great Coram Street, Seven Dials, St. Mary Axe, and other odd nooks, with interest, for those were the days when *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* were shining in vernal freshness. There was a little coffee-shop in Marylebone-lane where they took in the delicious green monthly numbers. With what peculiar and intense delight did I read there one evening the new-born chapters (it was of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, I think), and afterwards, walking to the top of that crooked street, gaze for a quarter of an hour—furtively, and often shifting my ground—at the brass plate inscribed 'CHARLES DICKENS,' on the door of a square, modest, comfortable-looking, somewhat squat house which still stands at its corner of the New Road—and think once more, 'What a wonderful place is this London!' It seems odd to me now that I never dreamed of the possibility of seeing the great man, much less of making his acquaintance. A glimpse of the author of *Nicholas Nickleby* would have been bliss too much almost for earth.

Are there boys now coming up to great cities and worshipping before hall doors? I suppose so; yet it is difficult to conceive it. Is this generation drier and cooler—or only my imagination? The name which I revered is now, alas! written on a stone in Westminster Abbey.

The chief streets, squares, and bridges were separately identified and examined, as well as Printing House Yard, Bedlam, and a hundred other interesting places and public buildings. In the evening my unfailing resort was the theatre, a novel and wonderful amusement—any and every theatre in London from Her Majesty's to the Victoria. I

heard Grisi, Mario, and Lablache in the mellow perfection of their gifts, as well as O. Smith and the Keeleys; saw Fanny Essler and Fanny Cerito in artistic ballets (not mere expositions of legs), and the brave sailor of the *New Cut* in his British hornpipe. Buckstone was then, as he long afterwards continued to be, the delight of the old Haymarket—a theatre of pleasant associations, with its English comedies, steady going company, and general suggestiveness of ‘going to the play,’ as in the good old times; and with a hospitable pit, too, which, instead of shoving you under a dark shed, like most, made you at home in the house. Few, if any, remain of the favourite players of that time. A crowd ‘of infinite jest’ have followed (for the jesters are infinite) their famous brother Yorick¹.

The public has a sort of indulgent fondness for actors; their names, likenesses, themselves caught glimpse of in the street, carry a certain light charm; they are associated with hours of holiday and amusement; they are at once familiar enough for interest, and strange enough for curiosity, of an easy, lazy kind. But this pleasant feeling is always more or less flavoured with contempt for the trade of mimicking emotion. In some rare cases this contempt, which appertains to the business of acting, is apparently overcome—but in reality only overlaid—by the individual excellencies of an actor².

Modern theatrical audiences, already glutted with novels and newspapers, require what is showy, stimulating, amusing, and racy; costly clothes and scenery, prosaic physical

¹ And now (in 1889) every theatre in London, except Drury Lane, has been either rebuilt or altered out of recognition, and a crowd of new ones added.

² This remark gains some interest in view of the favour into which acting and actors, both public and private, have sprung during the last twenty years. Whether this be a good social symptom or bad, the student of national manners and character cannot pass it over.

sensationalisms, joking in the form of slang and burlesque, always striving to ridicule and degrade something that truly deserves respect; and everywhere must come in, on any excuse or none, pretty girl-forms, drest with the highest piquancy that the Lord Chamberlain's office is likely to permit, or, rather, to neglect to notice. The Music Halls give this kind of æsthetic aliment with rather more pepper in the cookery (though the Theatres run them hard), and along with it the positive material delights of tobacco, beer, spirits and water, champagne if you are rash enough, and moreover the propinquity of female society of a kind in which the law of *Wahlverwandschaften* has extremely free play. At the same time they who prefer to regard this element from aloof can do so — withdrawing even to where Respectability in her private box not seldom snatches a fearful joy, regarding the wickedness of the world through the sticks of her fan, as it were, like Hogarth's lady visiting Bedlam. A British matron watching the Can-can with the utmost severity of aspect, not missing however a single fling (else how could she properly denounce the performance hereafter?), is in herself a remarkable spectacle.

The regular music-hall nautch, now so attractive, was, I think, entirely unknown in my early days; and there was comparatively little dancing and frisking at the theatres. Acting was still the main attraction. There are many Music Halls now, and some Theatres are making much effort to rival their special attractions. It would need an observer of extreme intellectual subtlety and moral sensitiveness to discriminate accurately between the objectionableness of the performances at the Mile-End Palace of Delights and of a burlesque at the Gaiety, a pantomime at Drury Lane, or a ballet at any theatre you choose—and ballets are brought into any drama on any pretence. But the Halls, with their free-and-easiness, beer and 'baccy, and other practicalities, have a great and perhaps invincible advantage.

The proper business of the arts (at least so it appears) is to garnish and ornament a little the gratification of the animal senses. To act on this theory is the way to please our mighty patron, the Public, whose favour is bliss, the way to attract the crowd of cockneys and the swarm of rustic visitors; in other words, to divert into our reservoirs a rapid and perennial stream of coin—from the two guineas for a box at a Theatre Royal, to the two or three pence for a place in the boosy paradises of White-chapel or Westminster Road. Moreover, the garnishing is not even good of its kind, fails even in sensuous beauty and gracefulness; the dancing and posturing relying mainly on nudity and violent action; most of the singing mere shouting; the words stupidly vulgar. The Music Halls, in short, are equally improving to the taste and the morals; a great educational establishment they are, more effective than any which the new School-Board can set up.

Yet the intellectual and poetic aspect of the drama and of acting has not yet been entirely obliterated, perhaps never will be. Even still, I have from time to time a longing to go to the theatre, and never go without some expectation, some vague hope of spiritual refreshment; but alas! the wine offered to the thirsty soul is usually once again the log-wood port of vitriolic gin. It sometimes seems as if the hope must have some meaning, as if it might be not impossible to give men a noble and elevating delight by means of the drama, even in our days. Not impossible—but in any case mighty hard to accomplish. For idealism, not realism, must be the beginning and the end of the enterprise—idealism which seems foolishness to the multitude, and to all but a few; and yet it is what all human creatures dimly and perpetually long for. How can the few set up and for a time keep going an enterprise of such elaborate and costly nature as a theatre? Among all the whims of wealthy *whimsters* (we want the word) who are not few in England

—in counterbalance of her conventionalism, and in reaction from it—will anyone attempt an Ideal Theatre? It would have a concealed, but powerful and exquisite, orchestra; a stage lighted from above, instead of by uglyfying footlights; no chandelier-torture for the spectators; scenery broad, simple and suggestive. I should like to try heavy green curtain-folds at the sides of the stage, and the scenery to begin further back from the eye than at present, and to mingle inward on each side into the shadows of these curtains. Dresses and grouping to be artistic, not showy; action, elocution, everything subdued into a general harmony of effect. Instead of vulgar luxury, sensation, and the parade of individual cleverness, there would be poetic *ensemble*. Moreover, instead of the amazing discomforts to which three-fourths of the much-enduring playgoers of our day are subjected, arrangements for elbow room, clear view, ventilation, and general civility would be carefully provided.

What form of dramatic composition would find its fit place and habitation in our ideal theatre? In my opinion, musical drama; not ‘opera’ precisely, but poetic and ideal drama, with frequent, sometimes continuous, musical accompaniment—drama lifted and floating on the ethereal element of music.

Realistic or prosaic drama (including all drama so far as it is presented realistically) is at the very best a low and coarse amusement, full of vexing disturbances for the Imagination, nay essentially self-contradictory and absurd. All the great plays of the world, Eastern and Western, are ideal, and were ideally presented. I saw lately *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Superficially (as to scenery, dresses, groupings) it was fair enough. The only good actor played Bottom, and thus Bottom became the chief person of the piece. The two pairs of lovers were ‘sticks,’ Theseus was an egregious stick. Puck, a girl of perhaps fifteen, delivered the fantastic rhymes in a stage-colloquial manner, with

strong cockney intonation. There was no true *ensemble*. The exquisite poetry had scarcely the least effect. What I wish to remark is, that if even the same actors had been trained to deliver the verse throughout with a determined, though never coarse, rhythm and cadence, rising in the rhymed lines to recitative, and in the lyrical passages into chant and song, the whole effect would have been marvelously different. Poor little Long-Acre Puck, I warrant thou couldst have sung or chanted thy lines prettily enough, gliding about the dim chamber—

And we fairies that do run
By the triple Hecate's team
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolick. Not a mouse
Shall disturb this haunted house—

instead of that afflicting cockney stage-emphasis. But the singing and chanting would be far easier to manage than the poetic recitative. The delivery of poetry with a delicate yet marked rhythm—never colloquial, never losing its metrical form, always lifted (be it ever so little) out of prose—is a part of their business, a main part, in which most English actors are totally untrained. Excessive *sing-song* delivery of poetry (a fault on the right side) is far preferable to colloquialism—so-called *natural* emphasis: a truth which few, even among the highly cultivated readers of poetry, apprehend. Children and untaught people feel and act upon it instinctively. In many of Shakespeare's passages, I may add, the finest poetic emphasis *coincides* perfectly with the colloquial, to delicious effect,—but still metrical effect. His actors doubtless gave poetry better than ours, yet after all I should guess he was oftener plagued than pleased with them. At its ordinary level, acting is a poor subsidiary kind of talent, which spoils more than it enhances.

The two chief men who have studied the stage in modern

times, and glorified it with their work, express no high opinion of the human puppets who conveyed to the multitude (and too often garbled) their thoughts and fantasies. Shakespeare speaks in unmistakably personal tone of the

poor player,
Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more.

And again where he makes Casca say of Cæsar, ‘If the tag-rag people did not clap him, and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they used to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.’ This is Shakespeare’s tone throughout. Goethe, in one of his latest books, records *his* deliberate verdict on the theatre. Wilhelm, in visiting the various departments of the region of Ideal Education, sees no place for Dramatic training, and his Conductor tells him—“We must not hide from you that in our whole Province there is no such edifice to be seen. The drama presupposes the existence of an idle multitude, perhaps even of a populace; and no such class finds harbour with us, for birds of that feather, when they do not in spleen forsake us of their own accord, we soon take care to conduct over the marches. Doubt not, however, that in our Institution, so universal in its character, this point was carefully meditated, but no region could be found for the purpose—everywhere some important scruple came in the way. Indeed, who among our pupils could readily determine, with pretended mirth or hypocritical sorrow, to excite in the rest a feeling untrue in itself, and alien to the moment, for the sake of calling forth an always dubious satisfaction? Such juggleries we reckoned in all cases dangerous, and could not reconcile with our earnest objects.”

“It is said, however,” answered Wilhelm, “that this far-stretching art promotes all the rest, of whatever sort.”

“Nowise,” answered the other; “it employs the rest, but spoils them. I do not blame a player for uniting him-

self with a painter, but the painter in such society is lost. Without any conscience, the player will lay hold of whatever art or life presents him, and use it for his fugitive objects—indeed, with no small profit; the painter, again, who could wish in return to extract advantage from the theatre, will constantly find himself a loser by it, and so also in the like case will the musician. The combined arts appear to me like a family of sisters, of whom the greater part were inclined to good economy, but one was light-headed, and desirous to appropriate and squander the whole goods and chattels of the household. The Theatre is this wasteful sister; it has an ambiguous origin, which in no case, whether as art, or trade, or amusement, it can wholly conceal.”

‘Wilhelm cast his eyes on the ground with a deep sigh, for all he had enjoyed or suffered on the stage rose at once before his mind, and he blessed the good men who were wise enough to spare their pupils such pain, and, out of principle and conviction, to banish such error from their sphere.

‘His attendant, however, did not leave him long in these meditations, but continued: “As it is our highest and holiest principle, that no talent, no capacity, be misdirected, we cannot hide from ourselves that, among so large a number, here and there a mimical gift will sometimes decidedly come to light; exhibiting itself in an irresistible desire to ape the characters, forms, movements, speech of others. This we certainly do not encourage; but we observe our pupil strictly; and if he continue faithful to his nature, then we have already established an intercourse with the great theatres of all nations, and so thither we send any youth of tried capability, that, as the duck in the pond, so he on the boards, may be forthwith conducted, full speed, to the future quack-quacking and gibble-gabbling of his life.”

‘Wilhelm heard this with patience, but only with half-conviction—perhaps with some spleen; for so strangely is man tempered, that he may be persuaded of the worthlessness of any darling object, may turn away from it—nay, even execrate it, yet will not see it treated in this way by others; and, perhaps, the Spirit of Contradiction which dwells in all men, never rouses itself more vehemently and stoutly than in such cases.

‘And the Editor of these sheets may himself confess that he lets not this strange passage through his hands without some touch of anger. Has he not, too, in many senses, expended more life and faculty than was right on the theatre? And would these men convince him that this has been an unpardonable error, a fruitless toil?’

The quotation is from Carlyle’s translation. Goethe afterwards revised his work, but these passages remain unaltered in the final edition.

It is true that in a conversation with Eckermann, in 1827, Goethe said: ‘A great dramatic poet . . . may succeed in making the soul of his pieces become the soul of the people;’ but in our phase of civilisation, which, while drawing the mediocre multitude into vast cities, places everything on a commercial basis, there is very little effect of that sort to be expected. The Stage of Shakespeare’s time had no women, no scenery; his plays were a popular library, historic and poetic.

The hope of a revival of the drama is but faint in my bosom. Our social state must first be much altered. We are costly, prurient, frivolous, *blasés*. Artistically, we are well-nigh barbarous. What is the stage’s office but to increase and to extend the effect of noble poetry? For this, refined simplicity, ideal elevation, general harmony, are essential; and how shall they be found on the stage if they have vanished from life? The great dramas will now-a-days do their part best for the student independently, his

own imagination furnishing scene and actors according to its power. The trained and emphatic elocution of even middling actors is impressive at first to the young, and a play in action a wonderful thing altogether; but it soon becomes clear that *Hamlet* and *As You Like It* and *Faust* unfold their subtle messages a thousand times better by the home-lamp, in the quiet chamber, than in the blaze and blare of the theatre. Every attempt at mere stage-effect and stage-illusion vulgarises the poetic drama. Elaborate set-scenes are always vulgar; the more care and cost bestowed on them the more irritating they are to a cultivated mind.

I cannot agree so well with the great German as to music, when he declares its powers to be thrown to waste when it connects itself with the stage. To music, as to all things that occupy men, Goethe gave thought and study, and he has made some noticeable remarks upon it also; but it is known that he was defective on that side in natural gift. Veneration must not become superstition. It is well to be clearly aware when men who have our full respect and attention overstep those limits of intuition and experience which, however wide in some cases, exist for all mortals. Here, however, is only a question of art; and to me, I confess, it appears that the musical drama is the only form in which the power of the theatre has any chance of a healthy revival—not revival by the agency of new and newer ‘stars’ at £1,000 a week, but by story, dialogue, acting, scenery, all removed from commonplace, all ideally treated, lifted and floating in the element of music, blending into harmonious *ensemble*, fit to nourish the imagination with food at once wholesome and delicious. I reckon my Ideal Theatre extremely unlikely to come, yet not quite impossible.

Music, in its full-grown strength, is especially the modern art. Poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, all culminated

long ago ; music has matured almost in our own time, and its chief treasures are not yet made general property. Music, moreover, fruitful of solitary bliss, of domestic charm, needs for the expansion of her full pomp and power a large alliance of means ; she admits and rewards a social, a civic, a national combination of skill. A national theatre of musical drama (with hints from the Greek stage, and also from the classic French) might be a fine thing.

There must have been originally a good deal more musical accompaniment to Shakespeare's plays than is commonly supposed. Besides the many songs, the martial music, dances, pageants, 'hautbois,' 'cornets,' 'trumpets,' &c., there are no few dialogues and passages evidently intended to be given on a background, as it were, of music ; for example, the moonlight scene in the *Merchant of Venice*, the masquerade scenes in *Much Ado About Nothing*, in *Love's Labour Lost*, in *Romeo and Juliet*, the banquet scenes in *Timon*, the play scene and others in *Hamlet*, the scene of Cordelia waking Lear, several parts of the *Tempest*, of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, of *Cymbeline*, of *Twelfth Night*, of *Macbeth*, of *Othello*, of *Antony and Cleopatra*, and so on.

But enough, for this time at least, of matters theatrical—not unimportant in their way. That the chief public amusement of crowded cities might be made much better than it is, can scarcely be doubted ; but how or by whom any large attempt at improvement could be expected to come is hard to say. Without demanding wonders, however, much that is inartistic and much that is uncomfortable in the present London theatres might be abolished easily enough ; and these obvious steps in good sense and good taste would most probably be found to 'pay.' So long as the Theatre competes, in the nature of its entertainments or in the order of tastes to which it appeals, with the Music-Hall, the attractions of the latter must outrival it with people of such tastes ; and the more such tastes spread,

which the Theatre thus helps to spread, the more the Theatre must lose ground. The people educated in bad taste will prefer the Music Hall, those who preserve a better taste will keep away altogether. The London Theatres are increasing in number and costliness, yet most of them, I believe, are notoriously 'bad speculations,' while the tills of the Music Halls overflow. But most of the Theatres are, as it were semi-Music Halls. They were better to turn into Music Halls, *bien entendu*, or to turn in quite another direction—or else to shut up.¹

Of course I went to see Hyde Park and all the parks in town. The quality used then to drive and walk chiefly on the north bank of the Serpentine, which is now almost deserted for that brilliant mile from Hyde Park Corner to the Albert Memorial. And very pretty it is now of a fine June evening; its double and triple procession of carriage company on one hand, its quick throng of equestrians on the other, its crowds of gaily-drest loungers on the side walks, all seen among bright green slopes streaked with soft yellow flame of westering sunlight and banks and beds of glowing flowers under the frondage of elm and sycamore, with here and there some luxuriant tropical plant carrying stories of Lima or the Carib Islands written on its broad-ribbed leaves. This park and the Regent's too are vastly improved in their floriculture of late years.

A nearer survey of the human elements in the spectacle is apt to be less satisfactory. The noble and stimulating exercise of a drive in Hyde Park at the rate of two miles an hour, in dust and sun, does not seem to give rise to much enjoyment, judging by the faces as they move past. Some

¹ The present run in 'theatricals' is not mainly among the cultivated but the fashionable part of Society (drawing in some of the former by curiosity) and, one may guess, will have sooner or later the fate natural to fashions.

look distinctly bored; but usually a haughty composure occupies the people in these handsome vehicles, drawn by the finest horses in the world, and extends itself to their splendid retainers. In many cases it would seem as if but little discrepancy might result if corpulent Jehu or stately John Thomas,

Inanely haughty, vulgarly serene,

were by some legerdemain made to change clothes and places with his master. Nay, perhaps Mary Cooke and Jane Housemaid (now at home) would not, after a little practice, play their parts very differently in essentials from the missus and the young lady who roll idly past. A passable dexterity in dealing with the letter H would perhaps be of harder attainment than the requisite 'inane haughtiness' towards the public ('tis easier to *be* haughty than to *say* it), and towards acquaintances that calculated sweetness of perfect insincerity which belongs to fashionable manners. But methinks I do friends Jane and Mary an injustice. The faces of the over-drest carriage-children, taking their first lessons in vanity and money-worship, fresh and pretty as they are, look pathetic in their premature composure and consciousness.

Turn to the loungers awhile. Observe the old beaux and the young dandies, real and imitation; the chignoned and flounced ladies who brave sunlight with cheeks a little too red and eyelashes a good deal too dark, *bien gantées, bien chaussées*; and the country folk, shy and clumsy—that big, jolly farmer, for example, with matron and daughter naïvely attired in a rustic parody of the fashion, gazing at the great world with untiring earnestness, quite different from the cool, intelligent glances of the London middle-class spectators, who mostly belong to the fair sex. See the sprinkle of shabby, discontented people, never missing, carried hither probably in the mood of self-irritation, who stand at corners staring defiantly

(take that tall, middle-aged, red-nosed man, of shabby mock-military aspect, with his arms folded) or who creep gloomily in their threadbare clothes among the gay crowds. There are old women in the pitiable last stage of shabby gentility—the shabbiness extreme, the gentility worn to spider's web, yet still visible. Some of them are clearly insane, bedizened with rags of gay colour and astonishing head-gear, an almost sure sign of madness, and perhaps especially of feminine madness — an efflorescence, as it were, of the morbidly excited brain.

Many pretty boys and girls are on the walks, some very costly, others less so, usually enjoying themselves in an inverse proportion; and perambulating babies with their nurses not a few. There is a wonderful mingling, in small space and without confusion, of all ages, ranks, and conditions. What sketches in London, here and elsewhere, for the brain and hand of some new character-draughtsman! I can half imagine him; humorous he must be, but sympathising, tender, poetic, loving humankind and landscape too; good artist withal—making beautiful work. Only scattered hints of such a genius Nature has hitherto sent us; yet, if he came, it would seem easy and simple to have produced him.

The 'Rough' rarely ventures to show himself in this sphere of society, which (at least in times of peace and order: think of what London *might* be!) gives too little scope for his peculiar manœuvres. The more polished rogue of either sex may sometimes coquette with a tempting pocket; but seldom; for detection is likely, and escape next to impossible. The Row is a safe place for the lounge. He is only likely to lose his time (which may not be worth much), or his heart, perhaps (only people don't usually carry that article about with them now-a-days), or if discontented or democratic enough, he may lose his temper in contemplating the exuberant display of idle luxury.

Certainly, great part of the costly manner of living, to which these carriages and dresses belong, appears quite useless. One asks, do these gilded Kilmannseggs themselves get any good of it? Well, let us take their point of view for a moment, as we mingle in this crowd of fashion, amid blazoned carriages and powdered footmen, lace and jewels, pride, pomp, and vanity. After all, are the people who set such store by these things to be counted foolish? Are they not extremely sensible and practical? They make a just and modest estimate of themselves. Consider what they really are, how insignificant their characters, how trivial their lives. What would they be, stript of all these costly appurtenances and appliances, which alone distinguish them? Why should they give up any point in the game of life? Society (that huge, mysterious tyrant, invisible yet omnipresent, neither truthful, nor moral, nor just, yet reckoned all-wise and all-powerful) is the real Deity of their worship. Society loves respectability, and money can make almost anything respectable. Society also loves what the French call *chic*, and, according to the Parisian maxim, '*l'argent est toujours chic.*' Now most of these people have only money. They build themselves on that. They put forward their claims to be counted true believers in Society and true worshippers, on the strength of that. They are wealthy people, and they take care, wisely, that everything about them shall be symptomatic of a heavy balance at the banker's.

They are wise, I say—after a very foolish manner; and the worst of it is, that all needless costliness of living (allowing the most liberal scope for every side and variety of human culture and enjoyment) *raises needless barriers between one man and another*, and thus hinders general progress, as well as narrows and pauperises the pleasures of social intercourse. *Que faire?* Well, one would like to see the nobler-minded among the millionaires (for such there are) set a fashion of plainness, without giving up one true

comfort or one real decoration of life. Dignity of character, fineness of taste and culture, would shine the more distinctively in their manners, conversation, dress, houses, and belongings, if they left sky-blue footmen, Court millinery and jewellery, &c., to become signs and tokens of the mob of wealthy vulgar.

Whatsoever thing, theoretic or practical, tends to divide from one another the well-minded, who are on a general level of thought and cultivation, is a great and a very great evil. There ought to be every possible opportunity for them to recognise each other, and to work together, or at least to the same ends. Doing their best in harmony (instead of doing nothing or else pulling fifty ways at once) they would still not be too strong against the evils whose name is Legion.

The policeman eyes us as we stand meditating and moralising. Let us 'pass away.'

After a dose of Hyde Park in the height of the season, I like to deviate through some low part of Soho, or even St. Giles's, noting (but not too pryingly) the faces, occupations, and amusements of its dingy denizens, and especially the grimy infancy that swarms in every close alley and on every dirty doorstep. Pallid and often squalid as they are, youth asserts even here its privilege of gaiety; and when the barrel-organ strikes up a Scotch reel, see how promptly six, eight, a dozen couples of dirty little girls, from five to fifteen, make a broad part of the pavement their ballroom, setting, turning, toeing and heeling, arms a-kinbo, and all the rest of it, with wonderful vigour and no little skill. The music changes to a waltz, and round go the little bare heads and tattered frocks, in a way to do any dancing-master credit. These street children, in fact, have a hundred times more practice in dancing than their dainty sisters of Tyburnia and Belgravia; and when they win admission to the longed-for Casino, as so many manage to do (it is a question of dressing),

they find no difficulty in joining the whirl on that splendid floor to the crash of a full orchestra, surrounded by chandeliers, mirrors, servants in livery, shining supper tables—a change from the dirty little room in Smoke Alley, or the hard work and dull life of a maid-of-all-work's place, which perhaps was the intermediate stage in Mary Ann's career. We have been looking forward into time, but meanwhile on grinds the organ, on goes the dance, and the little creatures really enjoy themselves, though liable to many an interruption, now from an incursion of rude boys, now from cabs or carts (if they have ventured into the street itself), now from a surly policeman, or some savage drunkard issuing from the public house at the corner. The organ stops, and away scatter the children. Some stare into the window of the cheap literature shop, full of exciting woodcuts, the last number of *Dick Turpin*, *Moll Fagon's Journal*, *The Flash Songster*, *The Murder Gazette*, from which their literary education is chiefly derived. Others watch curiously and whisper, as a young lady drest in the latest fashions, issues from a dingy street door, and with easy, careless glance to right and left, makes her rustling way to the nearest great thoroughfare.

English Reforms, French Revolutions, these loud-sounding words may mean much or little. Improvement of the mental and bodily condition of individual human beings is the only real thing, and the opportunity of real reform and revolution is given into the hands of each generation *in the education of its children*, and nowhere else. Truth and justice, industry and self-denial, peace and order, co-operation and mutual help—it would be quite possible to bring up in these principles, and in the corresponding habits of mind and body, tens of thousands of children who are now utterly neglected. Horses and dogs, kine and sheep, are much more cared for. I would avoid, like poison, teaching them any kind of theologic dogmatism; I would religiously abstain

from all crushing or even pinching of individuality of character: but there are a few broad principles of conduct which apply to all human beings, in all places and at all times, and in these, when common sense rules (that pure common sense which, as far as it goes, is at one and identical with the highest genius), the children of every civilised nation will be trained. Means can and must be found to do it; and in this case, emphatically, it will appear that the first step is the only difficulty.

How much we talk to this day of nations, of Latin and Teutonic races, of Germany, and France, and Italy, and England, and what mere folly nine-tenths of it is—what senseless and pernicious folly! We must increase our army, new drill our militia and volunteers, build new ironclads at half a million apiece (to go down, some of them, in half a minute), so as to be ready to fight France, or Germany, or America. Why, in Heaven's name, should we fight them? The Devil and the Diplomats only know! War is waste and destruction, torture and misery. It awakens, you say, certain high human enthusiasms and energies; but if your time of peace had been a state of health, those enthusiasms and energies would not have been asleep, but always awake and busy in wholesome contest with the normal difficulties (great enough without the invention of artificial ones) which never are and never will be absent from individual and social existence. They have been dormant; you were sluggish, apathetic, ashamed of your lethargy, yet unable to shake it off; now you spring up rejoicing in the new strength and glow—but they are of fever, of madness, and they will be succeeded by a deep depression, and by the return of old sloth and apathetic luxury. Must a city be besieged before it can find out that vice, idleness, and falsity are bad things, not to be tolerated? I care little, friend, whether you are French or German, English or Yankee; I care much whether you are wise and well-wishing, are disposed to be just and

humane, to be a truthful and helpful member of the human family, or whether you belong to the 'Dangerous Classes,' rich and poor. The danger, recollect, never *begins* with the working poor. They are mute, patient, and long-suffering creatures. People with much money and no conscience, and their imitators and hangers-on, are the true Dangerous Classes.

The idea of Nationalities, including that of separate and hostile development, has played a great part in the history of our race. The idea of Unity has a mighty part to play. Nationality can contain nothing but what is in Humanity. It is by excessive and morbid development of certain human feelings to the stunting of others that Nationality becomes predominant to the pitch of enabling a few plotters to bid millions of men cut each other's throats—and they do it. *Divide et Impera*. Humanity includes all nationalities, and Human Unity is the greatest of watchwords. When education for all, on certain broad general principles mainly moral and industrial, supplemented by free scope for every talent, is recognised everywhere as a necessary and a primary condition of social existence, those countless wars that have sprung from the ignorance of peoples and the selfishness of their governors, temporal and spiritual, will have no counterpart in the future of civilised countries.

Patriotism, an expansion of the love of home, is a natural and beautiful feeling; but how much has it not been perverted, to what dreadful uses has it not been applied by the cunning and ambitious!

My hobby is running away with me.

I love mankind as well, I hope, as another. I detest a 'Nation.' It is Selfishness and Vanity gigantically incarnate, a stupid and brutal monster, whose strength is his law.

The English Nation is my vexation,
The French is twice as bad;
Germanie she bothers me,
And America drives me mad!

Nations as neighbours, as friends, as fellow-workers, variety in unity—good! Nations as rivals, as counterplotters, as antagonists—bad and diabolical! Down with all armies of aggression! no more false and foul praise of soldiering for its own sake! Down too with kings and governors whose power rests on cannon and bayonet, and who foster that evil condition of the world which makes this possible!

I am a little out of breath. Let us come back to our gutter-children. Little Jack there, who offers you a cigar-light or cheap newspaper, or begs a copper, excites at present no practical interest in the governing mind of England; almost his only chance for that is by getting admission to the national institutions at Coldbath Fields or Millbank; or perhaps when he is eighteen or twenty he may see a notice on the street corner of ‘Smart Young Men Wanted,’ and, if gin and disease have left him fit for that noble career, don the red coat of the British soldier, and begin his education—a little too late, and not exactly in the best way either.

The glory of a general, an army, fighting for some great principle, is founded on deep truth. Men warmly recognise in them certain qualities which dignify the life and the race of man. In picture and sculpture, in song and story, the warrior shines pre-eminent. He represents in a direct and emphatic form the motto of all true men, ‘Death before Dishonour,’ and there are men in our army, and in every army, who still represent it nobly. But what of the average British soldier?—what of the accidental gentleman who chooses the Army for his profession or quasi-profession? That they both have plenty of physical courage is not questionable—the cock-and-bull quality, by no means rare in all male humankind. The British soldier is the costliest in the world; and let us admit, for argument sake, that he is one of the best-drilled. Is he sufficient to defend the State?—unanimous cry of ‘No!’ What are his relations and connections with the general body of citizens?—answer, the

reverse of wholesome and respectable. Each regular soldier ought to be as it were a *monitor* in a general school of defensive soldiership, and each officer a qualified and certified tutor or professor in the same. Briefly, what England wants, and may bitterly feel the need of ere long, is a well-drilled army of respectable men, of men certainly not *below* the ordinary rate in their conduct, with boundless reserves drawn (I do not know how drawn, but it could be done) from the general reservoir of the national strength, and then—without which the first would be of little avail—commanders, from ensign to general and field-marshal, who are proficient in the sad Science of War.

In London the soldier is not conspicuous, save in a few spots where barracks are situated. Here the taverns and low music-halls are nightly full of redcoats, and coarse, drunken blackguardism overflows now and again to the open street in an avalanche of oaths, curses, and blows. Knights-bridge, in the heart of fashionable London, is one of these spots (plague-spots), and one cannot help wondering how, night after night, so many soldiers have leave to stay out of barrack for the enjoyment of the refined amusements which they patronise.

Nightfall lessens the swarming throng in most of the business streets, and the 'City,' with its banks and wholesale stores, is nearly deserted; but in some quarters

The crowds, the leagues of lights, and the roaring of the wheels

make this time more impressive, one might say more awful than daylight, to a stranger in the immense capital. In the neighbourhood of theatres, with their satellite taverns and supper rooms, lamplight brings the dawn of their factitious day, and at midnight the pavements of Leicester Square, Piccadilly, and the Strand enjoy their sinister noon. The modern Circe is no daughter of the Sun. She is moreover, in her typical form, the most unromantic, unpoetic of created

beings. Yet (to omit for once the various secondary motives—sometimes paramount) difference of sex is profoundly interesting, and to be able to meet each other on easy terms is no slight attraction to men and to women also. Here the privilege, the solacement, is found in a most adulterated, hazardous, and every way objectionable form; but still it is attractive. The difficulties of social intercourse in England are extreme, and between people of different ‘grades’ almost insuperable. The conversation between ‘respectable’ men and women, when they can meet, is for the most part an elaborate and tedious sham. From the terribly dull monotony and the prudish sham morals of ‘Respectable Society’ the recoil is continually taking place to the other extreme of disreputability and no morals at all. The morals and manners which society professes are, and are felt to be, more or less false—this is at the root of the great evil in question. Out of one unnatural condition the revulsion is to an opposite one, equally unnatural, of which the evils are perhaps not greater, though more immediate and conspicuous.

As to police interference with this phase of London life I have only one word to say at present—namely, that it is quite practicable to make the public streets, from Highgate Hill to Denmark Hill, from Barking Creek to Kew Green, *decent* after nightfall; and this would be an immense gain. Their condition now, in various parts of the metropolis, is disgraceful and intolerable. Let parents with sons growing to manhood think of what it means.

I find myself far removed, not only in time but in state of mind (the real measure of life), from that early superstitious awe of the great streets and houses which seemed to promise an equal human superiority. What strikes me now is the foolish pretension of these tall buildings, these full shops, this endless walking and driving, buying and selling, shouting and placarding, and all this competitive crush and

cram of the paltry paraphernalia of life, intruding themselves so persistently on one's notice. 'Triumph of organisation,' if you will; but it does not seem to have done as much for the individual man as could be desired.

It has done something, however, this ever-moving crowd, in training people to avoid friction—a great help in life. The human particles glide about numberless, in all varieties of temper and of aim, with a minimum of friction. Each learns to think less of his own relative importance, and more of the need of self-dependence and self-care, in the midst of such a torrent of personal interests. That you are not of much account in the world: and, *ergo*, that you must look out for yourself: these are maxims men learn thoroughly in London—putting them in practice each after his own fashion.

What countless crowds these endless streets do fill!

Here man is cheap, and woman cheaper still.

Have money: 'ware police: do what you will.

Walk right, drive left: and guard your purse with skill!

Night in London (though it be the working-time of roguery and disreputability) has much that is picturesque and enjoyable. The sunset at a street's end, or through the trees in Kensington Gardens, is often magnificent. The night-air is purest. The stars and moon shine out at times with a peculiar impressiveness, beside or above some lofty spire, or in the sky-sheet between two long rows of houses. The broad winding River, its bridges and embankments and lines of lamps reflected in the stream, dusky forms of great historic buildings, roof, tower, dome, and spire dim-lifted from the mass of houses that spread away on either bank, with the perpetual distant hum, the sense of crowded life around you, the consciousness, as it were, of a great steady pulsation of humanity, and withal a strange sense of solitude, of isolation—the River at night has a large and solemn beauty of its own.

Morning twilight gives a strange look to the most familiar objects of the great city. The fronts of houses seem to stand out into the empty and silent road. Church spires spring airy and firm against the smokeless eastern sky. Late revellers creep home, watched by the pacing policeman. But here comes something of better cheer, the market-carts :

Under the dim and dewy stars they saw
The country wide in slumber ; entering then
The labyrinthine city, full of men
Asleep in armies, while new morrow bright
Unlocks its treasures of golden light,
Soon to awake with manifold designs,
In busy swarms to traverse countless lines,
Each human creature hurrying on its way
To weave the strange web of a London day.

Innocent soft splendour pouring ever in silent cataract over the round shoulder of the rolling Earth has again awakened Europe ; the cities on Bosphorus and Neva hum with Moslem and Muscovite ; Rome and Berlin are astir, and beleaguered Paris, that slept but ill amid the deadly circle of her foes. And now it comes creeping up the house-crowded Valley of the Thames, between the Kent and Surrey hills and the long slope of Middlesex, touching the gray old Tower, the Cross above the Dome, the pinnacles of Westminster, and glittering on the River with countless masts and many bridges. The murmur of rolling wheels, never altogether silent, waxes and grows incessant ; the coming and going Railway Trains shriek like demons ; and myriads of chimneys begin to send up their smoke into the morning air.

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